

THE CARLETON
Miscellany

**"The Man Who Knew What Ethiopia Should
Do About Her Water-Table,"**

by H. E. F. DONOHUE

**"Descent, Fall, and Sex—Darwin's
Victorianism,"**

by STANLEY EDGAR HYMAN

**Of C  nada: "Babes in Mooseland; Or, Maple
Leaf Drag,"**

by ERLING LARSEN

18 POETS

Fall 1961

90c



NEWSWEEK (June 19) "The New Republic has become almost 'must' reading on the New Frontier. . . Its subscription list reads like a who's who in government. . . And its contributors are every bit as impressive. . . The magazine has regained the excellence of its early days."

ERIC BENTLEY—"At any one time, there are a few people who write entertainingly about the theater. Robert Brustein in *The New Republic* is one of these. The number of people in America who also write thoughtfully about the theater is seldom higher than three. Robert Brustein is one of these today."

GILBERT SELDES—"Robert Brustein is the best man now writing dramatic criticism."

THOMAS HART BENTON—"The function of an art critic is not, in my view, to set up definitive judgments about art, but to stimulate thinking about it. Frank Getlein in *The New Republic* has done just that for me."

GEORGIA O'KEEFE—"I always look for what Frank Getlein writes on art. He states clearly and simply what he thinks about what he has looked at and I find it a pleasure to read what he has to say. I looked over a stack of old *New Republics* a few days ago and was amused and surprised to see how many I found opened to the Getlein page."

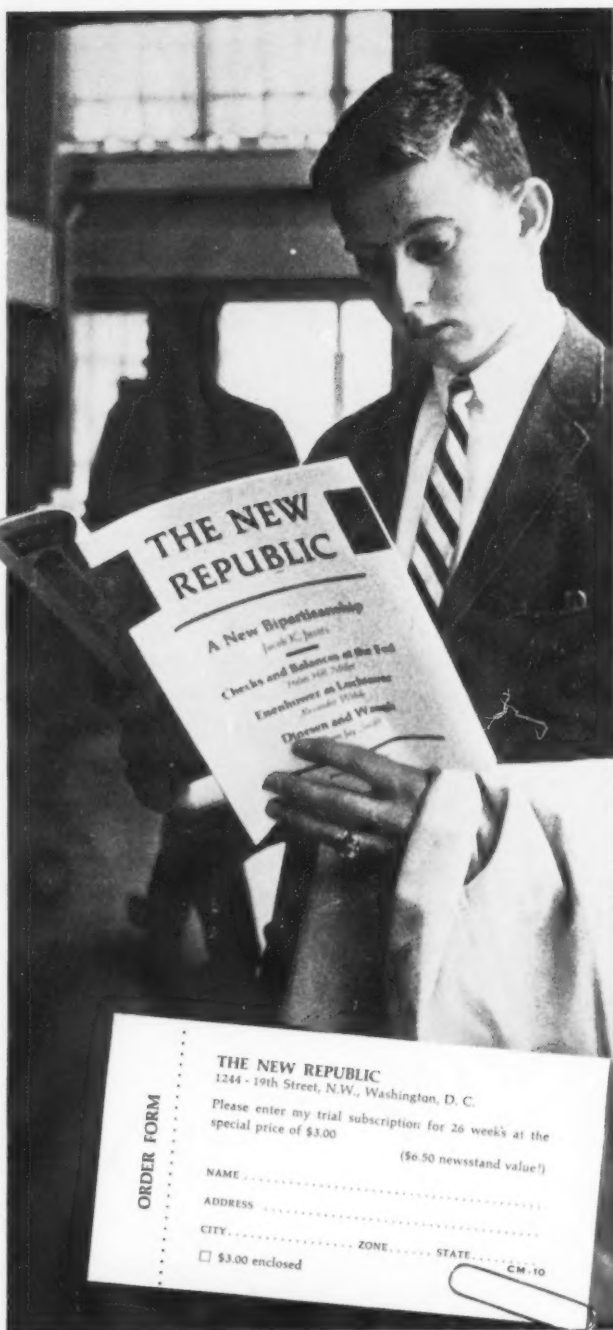
WILLIAM S. WHITE—"As a journalist I consider *The New Republic* must reading not only for my profession but for all people really interested in public affairs."

STEWART UDALL, Secretary of the Interior—"For years I have counted on *The New Republic* for ideas, for fresh and candid comment. I still do."

WALTER LIPPMANN—"The *New Republic* is growing in excellence and becoming a very necessary magazine to read."

KAY BOYLE—"I do not remember any film review of Stanley Kauffmann's which has not interested and impressed me. . . He is one of my great enthusiasms."

Other *NEW REPUBLIC* "regulars" (in addition to Stanley Kauffmann, Frank Getlein and Robert Brustein) Feiffer, Mauldin, Robert Osborn, Gerald W. Johnson, John Cogley, B. H. Haggin.



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NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

RICHARD EMIL BRAUN, a graduate of the University of Michigan, is "now doing doctoral pedantry in Latin and Greek at the University of Texas, with dissertation topic on *Propertius*." He has appeared in many literary magazines, and a chapbook by him called *Companions to Your Doom* has just been published by New Fresco, Inc., Detroit.

H. E. F. DONOHUE probably knows a good bit about Ethiopia, but he is now a New Yorker. Another story by him was printed in the *Miscellany* last year.

IRVING FELDMAN has a volume of verse coming out this fall (Atlantic-Little, Brown) in which the poems in this issue will appear, as well as one, "Assimilation," printed in the *Miscellany* a few issues back.

DONALD HALL reports, in connection with his poem, "Notes on Contributors," that he has just quit

being poetry editor of the *Paris Review*.

BETTINA HARTENBACH is a writer who lives and works in Washington.

LESLIE WOOLF HEDLEY writes as follows: "LWH obtained some acroamantics at NYU and Oxford, is an American poet in exile (San Francisco), author of six published books, the last being *Motions and Notions*, a motley collection of priceless (\$2) aphorisms. He is presently a member of a subversive society that is so secret he knows of no other member. Being unemployable he is in his own business." He then adds, "Do people really read the contributors' column? Do you think someday someone might write a thesis on such columns?" The editors of the *Miscellany* have no answer for question one, but think the answer is "inevitably" to question two.

LUCILLE HERBERT teaches English at Carleton.

PATRICIA HOOPER won a first prize for her verse in the University of Michigan's Hopwood Contest for 1960. She will graduate from Michigan in 1963, but has already had poems printed in or accepted by *The American Scholar*, *New Directions* 16, *Poetry* and other magazines.

RICHARD HUGO's verse has appeared in about 20 magazines, and

his first book, *A Run of Jacks*, will be published by the University of Minnesota Press this fall. He lives in Seattle and once was an editor of *Poetry Northwest*.

The Darwin essay in this issue, by STANLEY EDGAR HYMAN, will appear next year in a volume of essays by Mr. Hyman on some of the literary and personal characteristics of such men as Darwin, Marx and Frazer.

DONALD JUSTICE, poet and teacher at Iowa's Writer's Workshop, recently edited the *Collected Poems of Weldon Kees*, which was reviewed in our spring issue.

MALCOLM LOWRY's poetry has been appearing in a good many magazines in the last year as a result

of the labors of the writer, EARLE BIRNEY, who is editing Lowry's verse and who has an interesting sketch of Lowry's life in the spring issue of *The Tamarack Review* (Box 157, Postal Station K, Toronto). Of the poems printed here Mr. Birney reports as follows: "FOUL ACAPULCO, written Mexico, mid-Thirties. 'Paraiso de Caleta,' hotel he stayed in; Caleta is the 'morning beach.' Marston ref. is to *Antonio's Revenge*, V:iv:4. You THINK YOU ARE A MAN, Dollarton, Fifties. HYPOCRITE! Dollarton, Fifties." Mr. Lowry died suddenly in 1957. His best-known work is a novel, *Under the Volcano*.

THOMAS McAFEE teaches at the University of Missouri. His work has appeared in many magazines,

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and in 1960 the University of Missouri Press brought out a book of his called *Poems and Stories*.

JOHN MONTAGUE had a poem in our last issue. He is an Irish poet living in Paris who has a book of poems being published abroad this fall, the title poem of which appears here, "Poisoned Lands."

PAUL NEWMAN teaches at the University of Kansas, but appears on the South Atlantic in the summer, at Ocean Beach, South Carolina.

CHARLES PHILBRICK teaches at Brown. In 1958 he won the \$1000 Wallace Stevens Poetry Prize. In 1960 a book of his verse called *Wonderstrand Revisited* was published by Wake-Brook House. Recently, with E. M. Blistein, he moved into the textbook business with a volume called *The Order of Poetry* (Odyssey Press).

DONALD SCHIER, chairman of Carleton's Romance Languages Department, has just returned from a siege of Paris.

IRWIN TOUSTER's spot sketches in this issue do not represent him as fully as we had hoped. We had hoped to run photographs of some of his recent sculpture, which is to be exhibited this fall in a New York gallery, but were unable to manage a picture section at this time.

E. M. WHITE, a Harvard Ph.D., is an instructor in English at Wel-

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lesley. He is working on a monograph on Jane Austen, in between stories.

ROBLEY WILSON teaches Russian and English at Valparaiso University and helps edit *Metamorphosis*.

The other contributors to this

issue — except for inadvertent omissions which we might as well apologize for before we find them — have appeared in *The Miscellany* before and have given us no new vital information. They all seem to be in good health, and writing, writing.



A QUARTER'S WORTH

The fall comes on, and the crises. The barbed wire is up in Berlin, the bombs are again being tested, a new president of uncertain intentions has just been installed in Brazil, tentatively, like a hat being tried on at a haberdashery.

The editor sits at his wheaties with the morning paper. James Reston is coming at him; Reston is feeling Kennedys pulse, Reston the doctor, Reston the barometer, Reston the geiger counter, telling the worlds eaters of wheaties where the World is at 8 a.m.

The editor finishes his wheaties, drinks his coffee and thinks of giving up editing, giving up writing, giving up. Let Reston carry the burden; no one else can. No one else has a newspaper; no one else can keep up. It is hard enough to keep up with Reston.

And to reply to Reston? By the time one replies to Reston Reston is twenty or thirty columns past the occasion for reply. He is off feeling pulses in Tunisia, Yugoslavia, Pakistan. The wheaties are soggy. As for poetry, well, poetry should join the United Nations—protection for backward wits. For the world, the world is all Reston's, the real world the world of the here and now, the world of the pulse, the mood, the ephemeral headache. Truth is not truth that is not daily. Let our es-

cutcheon show journalism rampant on a field of White House releases.

For who is there of any possible consequence to the world, in any place of any possible consequence to the world, who is seriously taking the "long view?" Has anybody seen any long views lately? What is a long view?

A long view is what backward wits and nations take; no one else has time, can afford it, or even thinks it worth viewing. *Time* should become a daily; its eminence is threatened. We should all wear wristwatch radios. Students should be given current events quizzes at the beginning of each English class. Kennedy's and Khrushchev's pulse rates should be printed each morning next to the pollen count.

The editor leaves the breakfast table and ascends to his office and his typewriter, to his little pastoral den, and sits there in the dead past with the dead manuscripts and the dead proof and the dead old books with dead old history and philosophy and literature in them, and sets about dummyming his dead fall issue. Yes, dummyming. Dummyming, the occupation of dummies in an age of dummies—all dummies except the timely ones, the minutemen: Reston, Kennedy, Khrushchev.

R. W.

DEPARTMENT OF AMERICAN

Editor, Wayne Booth

"The infuriating thing about Americans is that, though they may not speak or write particularly good English, they are so much *nicer* than we are."

—F. W. Bateson, in the January *Essays in Criticism*.

Dear Reed:

This column is late because, in the midst of writing it, I read Robert Liddell's claim that only sots construct *sottisiers*. I was immobilized for several weeks, but along came Bateson and restored me.

Before beginning, may I just record how shocked I was to learn that you have been taking THE ART OF SINKING straight? I refer to your recent subscription reminder, which included the phrase, "And please correct the address below if it is not correct,"¹ thus slavishly following Principle I-B ("Creative Redundancy"). Perhaps I am doing you an injustice; perhaps your staff is so large that you now have a man who writes the notice of expiry. Will you please have whoever is responsible re-write it three different ways, none of them quotable in this column? (Suggestion: If necessary correct your address").²

While I'm on the subject, may I just ask whether your advertising department, big or small, could not make the expiration of a *Miscellany* subscription sound a bit more important. "Your subscription expires

with the current number." No salutation, no personal note. Compare that with *Life's*,

Don't let the light go out! For some time past, LIFE has turned a searchlight on the world for you . . . has lighted up for you the dark places of the globe and made the shadowed corners bright. . . But the light is dimming, and may soon flicker out . . . for the 'current' must be cut off unless we hear from you soon. . . Keep the light turned on so that you can see all of life shown brightly in LIFE'S pages.

Four hundred and twenty three such words, with thirty one dashes, a "Cordially," and irregular margins surrounded by a halo-effect! Compare that with your twenty nine words and a "Bill Me." I leave you to clean up your own office.

Oh, by the way,³ I appreciated receiving the little letter you got from Definition Press—the one with the runic letterhead: "Definition is Wonder." It was wonderful to learn all about the article on Aesthetic Realism—and *before* it had

even come out—but I wonder if you thought hard enough about the implications.

For the first time, a student of Eli Siegel has presented Aesthetic Realism for the public eye in a manner cogent, easy, graspable—and not thin or watered. It is because we of Definition Press think a discussion of Aesthetic Realism and the Siegel Theory of Opposites has been postponed too long, that we are writing of this 'first' article. . . . We do hope the Herz piece will be seen, and used for the needed, just consideration of Aesthetic Realism.

Now of course you over there know more about how to run your office than I of London could possibly know, but how long has it been since *CM* sent out letters to all the other editors in the country telling them in advance about, well, say, about Booth's Theory of Ironology? "For the first time, a student of American has presented a straight and forward account of..."

While I'm on the subject,⁴ do you send out little reminders to your influential readers about how influential you are? I would not, of course, presume to tell you how to run your little business, but what I always say is that any method that's good enough for *The Yale Review* is good enough for us:

Dear Reader: . . . We address

you as a literate and intelligent adult, as a responsible citizen of the United States concerned for the health of our national society and for the rightness of our actions as leaders of the free world community. As such you are a member of an American minority so small as to constitute a disturbingly minor fraction of our exploding population. . . . *Reading* must certainly remain the foundation of your program of preparedness. . . .

After five pages of this, one of course subscribes. But I'll warrant that readers of *CM*—though never reminded of the fact, to my knowledge—make an even smaller minority and are even less well prepared for what *The Yale Review* calls keeping "their bearings in a world of rapid change and gathering crisis." As a BBC speaker said over here, at 7:15 on Friday evening, April 14, talking of the world around us: "The imagination boggles at this spectacle—at least *mine* does!"

What it no doubt boils down to is this: you're editing a magazine off the top of your head; you're trying to suspension an up-to-date organization on horse and buggy springs. I just happen to have received, in my minor role as editor of this Department, a little brochure that deals very well with this whole situation: "Syllabus of Doyle, Dane, Bernbach Copy Training Program."

I'm sending it on to you, but I would just call your attention to the following units:

II. CREATIVE PHILOSOPHY of D.D.B.

Unit Exercise

1. Using the "Upside-down Man" thinking, develop one good and one bad headline-picture idea.
3. Read and write a short criticism of Julian Watkin's book, "The 100 Greatest Advertisements."

III. THE POWER OF PLAIN TALK

2. Develop situation and write body copy for Polaroid ad headlined, "It was one of those once in a lifetime shots . . . and one minute later I *knew* I had it!"
3. Rewrite the above two ways:
 - a. Using every fancy word you think of;
 - b. Using only those words a child can understand.

You might also profit from the units (in the same brochure) on THE POWER OF VISUALIZATION, BASIC PRINCIPLES OF WRITING SALES PROMOTION COPY ("Write three trade ads on the following accounts: a. Levy's Bread, b. Sebb, c. Nitey-Nite"), and especially THE COORDINATION OF ALL AGENCY DEPARTMENTS.⁵

The truth is, of course, that it

may be too late to do very much about our situation. Correspondence constantly flows into this Department demonstrating that we just haven't got it, can't hope to compete in this business of mass entertainment, even though that's where we more or less all are:

There's nothing new in TV except DE FOREST THREE SCREEN TV Stereo Hi-Fi/FM Combination. *More fun than a three-ring Circus.* . . . Watch "Perry Mason," "Roaring Twenties," and "Bonanza" at the same time! Telecasters compete for your attention . . . You'll be thrilled and amazed. . . . Your eyes stroll from show to show and suddenly there's one you're sure you like the best. You'll be surprised to find you can easily enjoy more than one channel at a time. Of course, the sound is on tap in your hand remote control button. When the show you are hearing drags, shift sound to another, pick up the story and go back in time to catch the important . . .⁶

Maybe you over on that side of the ocean are inured to the wearing effects of trying to provide what at best can never become more than fourth ring to the circus, but to me (over here) the thought is paralyzing even though I am (as you know) the first (full) professor of Ironology.

While I'm at it,⁷ I may as well get one more thing off my chest: we got into this business too late; like jumping on the bandwagon when everybody else is having a ball in the unlocked barn. In the morning's mail I received two books for teaching poetry out of which. The first one sort of gives the principles and the second one the practice—the two books, in other words, doing between four simple covers what we, all our lives, have—but let me demonstrate:

Book I.

To the Instructor. This book is focused upon one problem: the comprehension of the semantic aspect of a poem. Although our theoretical commitments are as limited as we can make them, it appears to us that the semantic aspect can be considered apart from the formal aspect. This is neither to deny nor to assert that the formal aspect has some kind of sign function; but it is our belief that the response to the formal aspect must necessarily be inadequate if the semantic aspect is not comprehended. If "understanding poetry" means to have an adequate response to both aspects, then by "comprehending poetry" we mean "identifying the segment of the environment and the orientation toward that segment to which the words of the poem, as

words, refer and the orientation toward that segment which the words of the poem imply." Hence the second theoretical position which we occupy. A poem, like any work of literature, has as primary function the dramatization of an orientation toward some segment of the environment, including the self as other, i.e. as part of the environment.

We do not maintain that to "comprehend" a poem is the only thing one can do with it, or the only thing one ought to do with it—merely that it is the first thing one must do with it.

—*Word, Meaning, Poem*, by
Morse Peckham and Seymour Chatman.

Book II.

The major senses are these:
sight (the visual sense)
hearing (the aural sense)
smell (the olfactory sense)
taste (the gustatory sense)
touch (the tactile sense)
heat (the thermal sense)
motion (the kinaesthetic sense)

Notice how the several senses are affected by the following passages or whole poems:

1. Cold (thermal)
"St. Agnes' Eve—ah, bitter
chill it was!"

(Continued on Page 123)

CONTENTS

ESSAYS:

- Stanley Edgar Hyman**, "Descent, Fall &
Sex — Darwin's Victorianism" 11
- Erling Larsen**, "Babes in Mooseland; Or,
Maple Leaf Drag" 80
- Donald Schier**, "A Playgoer in Paris" 95

STORIES:

- Edward M. White**, "The Presence of Pain" 26
- H. E. F. Donohue**, "The Man Who Knew What
Ethiopia Should Do About Her Water-Table". 65

VERSE:

-see page 33

REVIEWS:

- Owen Jenkins**, *The Spanish Civil War*,
by Hugh Thomas 102
- Bettina Hartenbach**, *The Trial Begins*,
by Abram Tertz 110
- Reed Whitemore**, *Three Times Three*,
by Phyllis McGinley, and *The Tree Witch*,
by Peter Viereck 114
- Lucille Herbert**, *Selected Poems*,
by Conrad Aiken 117



DESCENT, FALL, AND SEX—DARWIN'S VICTORIANISM

By STANLEY EDGAR HYMAN

The Descent of Man and Selection in Relation to Sex, published in 1871, twelve years after *The Origin of Species*, is the payment on the latter book's promise that "light would be thrown on the origin of man and his history" (or, in later editions, "much light"). More narrowly, Darwin's deliberate aim in *The Descent of Man* is humbling "that arrogance which made our forefathers declare that they were descended from demi-gods." He begins the book's penultimate paragraph: "The main conclusion arrived at in this work, namely, that man is descended from some lowly organized form, will, I regret to think, be highly distasteful to many." C. Bouglé, in *Darwin and Modern Science*, fairly remarks of the *Descent*: "One might say that the naturalist had here taken as his motto 'Whoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted'." As the ambivalence of the quotation from Scripture suggests, however, the aim is not simply a diminishing of mankind, but the familiar tragic rhythm of action, a humbling that will end in exaltation. Thus by putting man back in nature, reminding him that "man is descended from some lower form," or "an off-shoot from the Old World Simian stem," Dar-

win offers him "a pedigree of prodigious length," if unfortunately not "of noble quality." Here is a stroll down the ancestral portrait gallery:

The early progenitors of man must have been once covered with hair, both sexes having beards; their ears were probably pointed, and capable of movement; and their bodies were provided with a tail, having the proper muscles. Their limbs and bodies were also acted on by many muscles which now only occasionally reappear, but are normally present in the *Quadrumana*. At this or some earlier period, the great artery and nerve of the humerus ran through a supra-condyloid foramen. The intestine gave forth a much larger diverticulum or caecum than that now existing. The foot was then prehensile, judging from the condition of the great toe in the foetus; and our progenitors, no doubt, were arboreal in their habits, and frequented some warm, forest-clad land. The males had great canine teeth, which served them as formidable weapons. At a much earlier period the uterus was double; the excreta were voided through a cloaca; and the eye was protected by a third eyelid or nictitating membrane. At a still earlier period the progenitors of man must have been aquatic in their habits; for morphology plainly tells us that our lungs consist of a modified swim-bladder, which once served as a float. The clefts on the neck in the embryo of man show where the branchiae once existed. In the lunar or weekly recurrent periods of some of our functions we apparently still retain traces of our primordial birthplace, a shore washed by the tides. At about this same early period the true kidneys were replaced by the corpora wolffiana. The heart existed as a simple pulsating vessel; and the chorda dorsalis took the place of a vertebral column. These early ancestors of man, thus seen in the dim recesses of time, must have been as simply, or even still more simply organized than the lancelet or amphioxus.

Our ancestors may have been arboreal, tailed quadrupeds, and still earlier, primitive fishes like the lancelet, but they long antedate William the Conqueror.

In this Franciscan world, with its Brother Chimpanzee and Lit-

tle Sister Amphioxus, we have the magical monism of totemic brotherhood, in which a man wearing bone buttons may very well *be* a cuttlefish. There are odd surrealist scenes in the *Descent* where the naturalist becomes magically one with the species he is studying: Mr. Verreaux of Australia, with a female butterfly in his pocket, pursued amorously everywhere by a crowd of several hundred male butterflies; Dr. Scudder exciting a cricket to answer him by rubbing on a file with a quill. The *Descent* gave Freud his basic vision for human psychological prehistory (borrowed by Darwin in turn from a Dr. Savage in the *Boston Journal of Natural History*). It is of course the Primal Horde, in which the old male gorilla keeps a harem of females and drives out the young males until they succeed in killing and replacing him. It is all an oddly pre-Freudian world, in which, for example, "the males of several amphipod crustaceans become sexually mature whilst young," inexplicably, since "they have not as yet acquired their fully-developed claspers." One might as readily call the *Descent* pre-Marxist, it is all so unsettling, and the *London Times* quite properly disapproved of its publications at the very moment of the Paris Commune.

One contemporary notice penetrated to the essence of *The Descent of Man*. It was by an anonymous reviewer in the *Spectator*, March 12, 1871. He wrote:

Mr. Darwin finds himself compelled to reintroduce a new doctrine of the fall of man. He shews that the instincts of the higher animals are far nobler than the habits of savage races of men, and he finds himself, therefore, compelled to re-introduce,—in a form of the substantial orthodoxy of which he appears to be quite unconscious,—and to introduce as a scientific hypothesis the doctrine that man's gain of *knowledge* was the cause of a temporary but long-enduring moral deterioration as indicated by the many foul customs, especially as to marriage, of savage tribes. What does the Jewish tradition of the moral degeneration of man through his snatching at a knowledge forbidden him by his highest instinct assert beyond this?

In other words, as the reviewer brilliantly recognized, the *Descent* is precipitous, a Fall out of animal Eden to the savage condition, and then the slow painful climb back. It is the myth of a moral Fall lacking in the *Origin*. In the *Descent*, Darwin shows by a series of anecdotes that animals are loyal, domestic, loving, courageous, and self-sacrificing. Birds, for example, will feed their blind, crippled, and orphaned. Even the lower animals share in this moral goodness. Thus:

Parental affection, or some feeling which replaces it, has been developed in certain animals extremely low in the scale, for example, in star-fishes and spiders. It is also occasionally present in a few members alone in a whole group of animals, as in the genus *Forficula*, or earwigs.

Primitive man, on the other hand, gets his moral character blackened regularly. "The licentiousness of many savages is no doubt astonishing;" they have "bad customs and base superstitions;" they are just as apt as not to kill their young and desert their elderly. When comparison is made, animals generally come off best. Thus "Our early semi-human progenitors would not have practiced infanticide or polyandry; for the instincts of the lower animals are never so perverted as to lead them regularly to destroy their own offspring, or to be quite devoid of jealousy." Even when noting that some animals "will expel a wounded animal from the herd, or gore or worry it to death," Darwin extenuates it with human comparison:

This is almost the blackest fact in natural history, unless, indeed, the explanation which has been suggested is true, that their instinct or reason leads them to expel an injured companion, lest beasts of prey, including man, should be tempted to follow the troop. In this case their conduct is not much worse than that of the North American Indians, who leave their feeble comrades to perish on the plains; or the Fijians, who, when their parents get old, or fall ill, bury them alive.

Darwin's conclusion aggressively picks up the question, whether

he would admit to simian descent, that Bishop Wilberforce had asked Huxley at the famous Oxford Meeting when the *Origin* was first published:

For my own part I would as soon be descended from that heroic little monkey, who braved his dreaded enemy in order to save the life of his keeper, or from that old baboon, who descending from the mountains, carried away in triumphs his young comrade from a crowd of astonished dogs—as from a savage who delights to torture his enemies, offers up bloody sacrifices, practices infanticide without remorse, treats his wives like slaves, knows no decency, and is haunted by the grossest superstitions.

Darwin's efforts, in fact, are not to reduce man to a bestial condition, as opponents of the book charged, but to ennoble and humanize animals. Thus "the brain of an ant is one of the most marvelous atoms of matter in the world, perhaps more so than the brain of a man." "The dream is an involuntary art of poetry," Darwin quotes from Jean-Paul, and adds "As dogs, cats, horses, and probably all the higher animals, even birds, have vivid dreams, and this is shown by their movements and the sounds uttered, we must admit that they possess some power of imagination." Could not "some unusually wise ape-like animal" have imitated the growl of a predator to his fellow-monkeys, and thus have invented speech? "No one with an unbiased mind can study any living creature, however humble, without being struck with enthusiasm at its marvelous structure and properties." "The mental powers of the Crustacea are probably higher than at first sight appears possible," Darwin writes, giving an example of very thoughtful behavior in a shore-crab. Mantises fight "like hussars with their sabres;" ants "have the power of recognizing each other after long intervals of time, and are deeply attached;" the male stickleback goes "mad with delight" when the female inspects the nest he has built for her.

The human power that will return man to Edenic innocence, and undo the Fall or Descent, is culture, although Darwin pre-

cedes the use of the word in its present-day broad anthropological usage for all non-biological inheritance. Thus biological man is a poor mammal, but cultural man is little lower than the angels. Darwin writes:

Man in the rudest state in which he now exists is the most dominant animal that has ever appeared on this earth. He has spread more widely than any other highly organized form: and all others have yielded before him. He manifestly owes this immense superiority to his intellectual faculties, to his social habits, which lead him to aid and defend his fellows, and to his corporeal structure. The supreme importance of these characters has been proved by the final arbitrament of the battle for life. Through his powers of intellect, articulate language has been evolved; and on this his wonderful advancement has mainly depended. . . . He has invented and is able to use various weapons, tools, traps, etc. with which he defends himself, kills or catches prey, and otherwise obtains food. He has made rafts or canoes for fishing or crossing over to neighboring fertile islands. He has discovered the art of making fire, by which hard and stringy roots can be rendered digestible, and poisonous roots or herbs innocuous.

Darwin makes it clear that this culture is compensatory. He writes:

The small strength and speed of man, his want of natural weapons, etc., are more than counterbalanced, firstly, by his intellectual powers, through which he has formed for himself weapons, tools, etc., though still remaining in a barbarous state, and, secondly, by his social qualities which lead him to give and receive aid from his fellow-men.

Man's capacity for "incomparably greater and more rapid improvement" than any other animal "is mainly due to his power of speaking and handing down his acquired knowledge." "At the present day civilised nations are everywhere supplanting barbarous nations," he writes, "and they succeed mainly, though not exclusively, through their arts, which are the products of the intel-

lect." He clearly needs the all-embracing term "culture" to oppose to "nature." When Darwin does refer to "culture" it is in the more limited sense:

Obviously no animal would be capable of admiring such scenes as the heavens at night, a beautiful landscape, or refined music; but such high tastes are acquired through culture, and depend on complex associations; they are not enjoyed by barbarians or by uneducated persons.

Culture does not guarantee man evolutionary victory, it just changes the terms of the competition, and the final vision the *Descent* offers for man is "if he is to advance still higher, it is to be feared that he must remain subject to a severe struggle." The new Eden is, however, in prospect:

Man may be excused for feeling some pride at having risen, though not through his own exertions, to the very summit of the organic scale; and the fact of his having thus risen, instead of having been aboriginally placed there, may give him hope for a still higher destiny in the distant future.

* * * * *

For a book mainly about sex, *The Descent of Man* is oddly reticent in certain areas. It is hard to tell whether this is choice or necessity, and my guess is that they reinforce each other. We know that the publisher made Darwin delete at least one indecency, a sentence that implied a capacity of female animals to experience sexual desire. One odd distortion fits in so neatly with Darwin's Oedipal identification that it is tempting to see it as a personal expression. This distortion comes up whenever Darwin talks about rudimentary bisexuality in humans. He writes:

It is well known that in the males of all mammals, including man, rudimentary mammae exist. These in several instances have become well developed, and have yielded a copious supply of milk. Their essential identity in the two sexes is

likewise shewn by their occasional sympathetic enlargement in both during an attack of the measles. The *vesicula prostatica*, which has been observed in many male mammals, is now universally acknowledged to be the homologue of the female uterus, together with the connected passage. . . . Some other rudimentary structures belonging to the reproductive system might have been here adduced.

Later he returns to the subject:

In the mammalian class the males possess rudiments of a uterus with the adjacent passage, in their vesiculæ prostaticæ; they bear also rudiments of mammae, and some male Marsupials have traces of a Marsupial sack. Other analogous facts could be added.

He is fascinated by male breasts and the prostate as a rudimentary womb, but he seems unable to write down the other analogous facts that "might have been here adduced" or "could be added," that the male sex organs appear equally in the human female, and with considerably more erotic function. Instead, Darwin goes on to develop an extensive fantasy of the male mother:

It may be suggested, as another view, that long after the progenitors of the whole mammalian class had ceased to be androgynous, both sexes yielded milk, and thus nourished their young; and in the case of the Marsupials, that both sexes carried their young in marsupial sacks. This will not appear altogether improbable, if we reflect that the males of existing syngnathous fishes receive the eggs of the females in their abdominal pouches, hatch them, and afterwards, as some believe, nourish the young;—that certain other male fishes hatch the eggs within their mouths or branchial cavities;—that certain male toads take the chaplets of eggs from the females, and wind them round their own thighs, keeping them there until the tadpoles are born;—that certain male birds undertake the whole duty of incubation, and that male pigeons, as well as the females, feed their nestlings with a secretion from their crops. But the above suggestion first occurred to me from mammary

glands of male mammals being so much more perfectly developed than the rudiments of the other accessory reproductive parts, which are found in the one sex though proper to the other. The mammary glands and nipples, as they exist in male mammals, can indeed hardly be called rudimentary; they are merely not fully developed, and not functionally active. They are sympathetically affected under the influence of certain diseases, like the same organs in the female. They often secrete a few drops of milk at birth and at puberty: this latter fact occurred in the curious case, before referred to, where a young man possessed two pairs of mammae. In man and some other male mammals these organs have been known occasionally to become so well developed during maturity as to yield a fair supply of milk. Now if we suppose that during a former prolonged period male mammals aided the females in nursing their offspring, and that afterwards from some cause (as from the production of a smaller number of young) the males ceased to give this aid, disuse of the organs during maturity would lead to their becoming inactive.

Other reticence in the book seems more characteristically Victorian. Hottentot women "offer certain peculiarities, more strongly marked than those occurring in any other race," which he finally reveals to be that "the posterior part of the body projects in a wonderful manner." There are odd euphemisms for animal rutting: "the season of love," "the final marriage ceremony," "their marriage unions," and so forth. Among the Aymara and Quichua Indians: "The men of these two tribes have very little hair on the various parts of the body where hair grows abundantly in Europeans, and the women have none on the corresponding parts." A summary of primitive physical mutilations omits circumcision, subincision, and cliterectomy, producing a delicious comedy when Darwin notes of tattooing: "This practice was followed by the Jews of old." The oddest euphemism in *The Descent of Man* is Darwin's term "licentiousness," which he keeps speaking of as a check to population: "There is reason to believe that in some cases (as in Japan) it has been intentionally encouraged as a means of

keeping down the population;" among savages "Utter licentiousness, and unnatural crimes, prevail to an astounding extent," serving "to keep down the numbers of each savage tribe"; the fall of Greece may have been due to "extreme sensuality." I suppose that by "licentiousness" Darwin means extra-genital intercourse, since I cannot see what else he could mean, and it would be interesting to know who encouraged it in Japan.

A good deal of the eroticism repressed in connection with human sexuality gets released in the accounts of animal sexuality, as it naturally would. Thus male sand wasps "are exceedingly ardent," and male snakes, "though appearing so sluggish, are amorous." Of frogs and toads:

It is surprising that these animals have not acquired more strongly-marked sexual characters; for though cold-blooded their passions are strong. Dr. Guenther informs me that he has several times found an unfortunate female toad dead and smothered from having been so closely embraced by three or four males.

The sexuality of the lower animals in the *Descent* is wildly surrealist. A cast-off cuttlefish tentacle goes off on its own and mates with the female. Of naked sea-slugs, which are hermaphrodite but couple, "It is conceivable that two hermaphrodites, attracted by each other's greater beauty, might unite." (In 1864, Darwin had written to B. D. Walsh: "What can there be in the act of copulation necessitating such complex and diversified apparatus?") Among the higher animals, there are scenes like nothing so much as French bedroom farce: while two capercaillie cocks fight over a hen, she "sometimes steals away with a young male who has not dared to enter the arena with the older cocks"; "one of a pair of starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*) was shot in the morning; by noon a new mate was found; this was again shot, but before night the pair was complete; so that the disconsolate widow or widower was thrice consoled during the same day"; "a female zebra would not admit the addresses of a male ass until he was painted so as to re-

semble a zebra"; some amorous male pigeons, "called by our English fanciers 'gay birds,' are so successful in their gallantries" that they have to be shut up, and some females are equally profligate "and prefer almost any stranger to their own mate."

In the world of the *Descent*, when Darwin or his publisher remembers, males are lustful, and thus morally inferior to pure and innocent females. In human society, in Darwin's prehistoric reconstructions, virtue begins among the wives and then spreads to the unmarried females; "How slowly it spreads to the male sex, we see at the present day." Where Darwin had information to the contrary, he suppressed it, as he did the statement from a correspondent in 1868 that "the common hen prefers a salacious cock, but is quite indifferent to colour." Among the lower animals, however, Darwin could let himself go, and here we clearly see the fantasy image of the dominating, passionate, aggressive female. "Thus the females of certain flies (Culicidae and Tabanidae) are bloodsuckers, whilst the males, living on flowers, have mouths destitute of mandibles." Here of course are his barnacles again: "The complemental males of certain Cirripedes live like epiphytic plants either on the female or the hermaphrodite form, and are destitute of a mouth and of prehensile limbs." The paragraph on domesticity among the spiders is reminiscent of nothing so much as Gulliver in Brobdingnag or Baudelaire's "La Géante":

The male is generally much smaller than the female, sometimes to an extraordinary degree, and he is forced to be extremely cautious in making his advances, as the female often carries her coyness to a dangerous pitch. De Greer saw a male that 'in the midst of his preparatory caresses was seized by the object of his attentions, enveloped by her in a web and then devoured, a sight which, as he adds, filled him with horror and indignation.' The Rev. O. P. Cambridge accounts in the following manner for the extreme smallness of the male in the genus *Nephila*. 'Mr. Vinson gives a graphic account of the agile way in which the diminutive male escapes from the ferocity of the female, by gliding about and playing hide and seek over her body and along

her gigantic limbs: in such a pursuit it is evident that the chances of escape would be in favour of the smallest males, whilst the larger ones would fall early victims; thus gradually a diminutive race of males would be selected, until at last they would dwindle to the smallest possible size compatible with the exercise of their generative functions,—in fact probably to the size we now see them, i. e., so small as to be a sort of parasite upon the female, and either beneath her notice, or too agile and too small for her to catch without great difficulty.

Matching the fantasy of the aggressive, devouring female is inevitably the fantasy of the gentle maternal male, living on flowers. Darwin writes:

The male of the smooth-tailed stickleback (*G. leiurus*) performs the duties of a nurse with exemplary care and vigilance during a long time, and is continually employed in gently leading back the young to the nest, when they stray too far. He courageously drives away all enemies including the females of his own species. It would indeed be no small relief to the male, if the female, after depositing her eggs, were immediately devoured by some enemy, for he is forced incessantly to drive her from the nest.

Among emus we have a reversal of "the usual moral qualities of the two sexes; the females being savage, quarrelsome, and noisy, the males gentle and good."

* * * * *

The Descent of Man is wrongly titled, at least in that its dominant mood is onward and upward. Man fell into the savage state, but he is rising out of it, and he will abolish it. "At some future period, not very distant as measured by centuries, the civilized races of man will almost certainly exterminate, and replace, the savage races throughout the world." Darwin writes quite dispassionately of the organized extermination of the aboriginal Tas-

manians by the settlers, calling it "the famous hunt." It is a proper survival of the fittest, and Darwin notes with no visible irony that "The New Zealander seems conscious of the parallelism, for he compares his future fate with that of the native rat now almost exterminated by the European rat."

Teleology is still inherent in Mother Nature, and perfection is visible ahead. Darwin reminds us "what an infinite debt of gratitude we owe to the improvement of our reason, to science, and to our accumulated knowledge." In his vision of man he sees "the standard of his morality rise higher and higher," and he looks to a future in which "the struggle between our higher and lower impulses will be less severe, and virtue will be triumphant." He generalizes from history:

It is apparently a truer and more cheerful view that progress has been much more general than retrogression; that man has risen, though by slow and interrupted steps, from a lowly condition to the highest standard as yet attained by him in knowledge, morals and religion.

"It is not improbable," he writes "that after long practice virtuous tendencies may be inherited." "It is incredible," he exclaims, "that all this should be purposeless."

Darwin's ultimates now go beyond natural selection. In primitive tribes, "The bravest men, who were always willing to come to the front in war, and who freely risked their lives for others, would on an average perish in larger numbers than other men. Therefore it hardly seems probable, that the number of men gifted with such virtues, or that the standard of their excellence, could be increased through natural selection, that is, by the survival of the fittest." However, as soon as we take a social unit the anomaly disappears: "A tribe including many members who, from possessing to a high degree the spirit of patriotism, fidelity, obedience, courage, and sympathy, were always ready to aid one another, and to sacrifice themselves for the common good, would be victorious over most other tribes; and this would be natural selection." Ex-

cept in this larger sense, "civilisation thus checks in many ways the action of natural selection." It is even an advantage, in the larger sense, to be less than the fittest in the narrower sense (*felix culpa* again). Thus Darwin writes:

We should, however, bear in mind that an animal possessing great size, strength, and ferocity, and which, like the gorilla, could defend itself from all enemies, would not perhaps have become social: and this would most effectually have checked the acquirement of the higher mental qualities, such as sympathy and the love of his fellows. Hence it might have been an immense advantage to man to have sprung from some comparatively weak creature.

The moral sense, Darwin quotes Mackintosh as saying, "has a rightful supremacy over every other principle of human action." He presumes that even ants have "some feeling of right and wrong, or a conscience." H. Hoeffding writes on "The Influence of the Conception of Evolution on Modern Philosophy" in *Darwin and Modern Sciences*: "Darwin has, indeed, by his whole conception of nature, rendered a great service to ethics in making the difference between the life of nature and the ethical life appear in so strong a light."

With a morality that is "useless" by his narrow functional criteria, Darwin is now tempted by a beauty similarly "useless." He writes:

Hardly any colour is finer than that of arterial blood; but there is no reason to suppose that the colour of the blood is in itself any advantage; and though it adds to the beauty of the maiden's cheek, no one will pretend that it has been acquired for this purpose. So again with many animals, especially the lower ones, the bile is richly coloured; thus, as I am informed by Mr. Hancock, the extreme beauty of the Eolidæ (naked sea-slugs) is chiefly due to the biliary glands being seen through the translucent integuments—this beauty being probably of no service to these animals.

Beauty in bird courtship display "is even sometimes more impor-

tant than success in battle." Darwin begins by demonstrating that the horns of stags are efficient weapons, worries about it, and goes on:

The suspicion has therefore crossed my mind that they may serve in part as ornaments. That the branched antlers of stags as well as the elegant lyrated horns of certain antelopes, with their graceful double curvature, are ornamental in our eyes, no one will dispute. If, then, the horns, like the splendid accoutrements of the knights of old, add to the noble appearance of stags and antelopes, they may have been modified partly for this purpose, though mainly for actual service in battle; but I have no evidence in favour of this belief.

Here, where he uses "purpose" to mean "no purpose," Darwin completely transcends the world of nature of the *Origin* and accepts the world of culture ("the ethical life," in Hoeffding's vocabulary, "grace" in St. Augustine's). His final moral imperative is curiously akin to Freud's concept of civilization as the taming of the instinctual life: "The highest possible stage in moral culture is when we recognize that we ought to control our thoughts, and 'not even in inmost thought to think again the sins that made the past so pleasant to us'." The quotation is from *The Idylls of the King*. It shows as well as anything could what the anonymous reviewer in the *Spectator* immediately perceived, that *The Descent of Man*, this bold attack on Victorian orthodoxy, was the salvation of Victorian orthodoxy in the only terms, imaginative and poetic, in which it could still be saved.

THE PRESENCE OF PAIN

By EDWARD M. WHITE

He hadn't wanted to go out with them. Bart and Gertrude were fools in a placid, bovine way. They symbolized for him the indifferent wastes surrounding all his attempts, as he would put it, to tilt out at the truth. He watched them across the table sip gingerly at their cokes, and was glad that the place was kept dark enough for any girl to look pretty and any man to hide his thoughts. *Hamlet*, his wife had said, might be the only chance of enduring an evening with Bart and Gertrude. Please, his wife had said, don't spoil it. But now he had to sit patiently and listen to them chew over the play.

They wished Shakespeare wasn't so morbid. They'd seen a movie once that—wasn't it in Miami?—or, no, it was just before the first baby came in Boston, because Gertrude was embarrassed so they went to a drive-in. Anyway—But here another fit of coughing stopped Gertrude short and Bart tried to look concerned and unworried at the same time. Harriet shifted the subject smoothly—she was good at that—and spoke of other plays. In their college years a good many rare ones had been produced. *Titus Andronicus* was the worst. Do you remember, she turned to him, how everyone laughed each time someone died? He remembered very well. All that had kept him there that time was the overpowering sense of disorder: a bad play, badly produced, for a silly audience.

Gertrude was coughing again, and Harriet stopped until the fit passed. She went on then, remembering the last student production they had seen: *The Revenger's Tragedy*, which the director had evidently thought was at heart a comedy. The biggest laugh-getter of the evening was the brother pandering for his sister, but almost as funny was the scene where the poisoned Duke is trampled as he dies in agony, watching his Duchess in bed with his bastard son. They had stayed for three hours of it, anyway. He shook his head. They don't believe in it, he thought. Nobody does. Bart called the waiter and ordered two more cokes, Gertrude needed to wet her whistle.

Gertrude was telling of a tour they had taken the last time they were in Boston. We always go for the Annual Meeting, she said. They always tried to take in one of Mrs. Eddy's "houses" each time, and, she confided, the Leader had lived in quite a few before establishing the Church. Love, she mused, can accomplish anything, against the greatest odds. He asked if they looked in at any courthouses, but a warning glance from Harriet stopped him short. The talk veered to babies.

Bart was expansive. When the kids start school, he insisted, trouble begins. Everything's fun before that. But that's when they start picking up ideas from the wrong kind. And that's why it's so important to start Sunday School early, so when the child comes up against something . . . Nothing protects like a knowledge of the Truth, that's what he meant.

Bart and Gertrude always seemed to feel it important to bring the erring ones back to the fold, so no evening together went by without the Truth entering from some shady corner. Which was one reason, he thought darkly, why he and Harriet avoided them whenever they could. Gertrude was fondly repeating Mrs. Eddy's prayer that three-year-old Daisy loved to say before going to sleep. It reassured the sweet little one:

Father-Mother God
Loving me,—

Guard me when I sleep;
Guide my little feet
Up to Thee.

Gertrude smiled with pleasure, and her cough seemed less harsh.

They asked about the baby. Harriet interrupted them. She does nothing but cry, she said, and we try to forget about her when we're out. Bart and Gertrude exchanged glances. Have you, Gertrude began, tried—. No, we've not tried anything, he said, with a bitterness of tone that distanced their concern. We like to hear her howl. It reminds us of the perfection of the universe.

As they walked out to the parking lot, he said to Bart, your wife sounds pretty sick. She's perfectly all right, Bart snapped. Sure, he replied. My mother coughed like that for a few months, then she died. Bart looked at him for a moment in the dark, frightened. She's perfect, perfectly all right. It's *you*, you're the one with the sickness inside you. Not us, not us.

Hours later he stood shuddering with fury in the cool nursery. There in the crib it lay, howling with impotent rage, and he hated it. He blinked some of the sleep out of his eyes and tied his robe tighter about his middle. He wanted to scream along with it, but Harriet was sleeping calmly in the bedroom and he didn't want to wake her. If he could. He grunted. Almost nothing woke her up now. Four months, he reckoned, and the first two she had taken by herself until the doctor ordered him to do his share. So now, goddam it, he was doing his share.

He turned on the light. It was 3:30. Harriet had taken over when they had gotten home, and the thing had gone to sleep at last about 2:30. It was holding its breath now, and he dispassionately watched the tiny face turn red, then deep red, start to tinge purple, when the scream exploded. Shut up! God damn you, he muttered fiercely, as he began to pull off the wet pajamas. At first, he had been ashamed of his fury at the baby.

He knew that the thing was not screaming at him, that some demon was knotting its belly and putting it through some infantine brand of torture, that there was only one way to take pain at that age—if there is any other way to take pain at any other age. But he couldn't help it. Pity and shame can only tinge anger with guilt for a while. Then the guilt doubles the anger.

For a while, he tried to take it out on the doctors. They called it colic because they didn't know what it was or what to do, and they sympathized in a smooth and offensive way, with their quiet assurance that it would end soon (like all evil), and the baby would be even healthier and cuter than the ones that didn't have this discomfort. He let loose a flood of obscenities in the same controlled tone. He was expert now at putting on the diapers, at holding the screaming form still with one hand, but his revulsion for the stinking wet ones grew each day. He put on dry pajamas, turned it on its front and went downstairs to heat a bottle.

When he returned he felt better. The howling wasn't so bad in the kitchen, he could even turn the water on full and not hear it at all. He picked it up—wet again, damn it—and held it, waiting for some let up in the screams so he could make it realize that a bottle was in its mouth. This was worst of all. He put it over his shoulder and walked around the room, but he couldn't take it for long. The screams were right in his ear and he knew now that it was very bad, that the thing might not take the bottle, that it might be like this for four hours or more. He felt the tormented belly. It was as if there were some tiny animal running around under the skin. The tight knots moved, changed size, as if some demonic football team were having a scrimmage. He began to massage the knots mechanically, but stopped. Nothing did any good, they knew that by now.

He sat down again with it in his lap. First doubled up, then stretched out with legs kicking, it tried to fight the pain inside. He tested the bottle, then jammed it in the open mouth. The gaping, screaming hole refused to clamp down on the nipple,

didn't even know it was there. He moved it around the mouth, hoping some nerve endings would realize more than belly. Drink, you little bastard, he muttered. Goddam it, drink! For a minute the mouth closed, sucked, but then it stiffened out in pain, and screamed red faced. He banged the bottle down on the floor beside the chair, and started walking with the howling in his ear again. Then he grumbled a curse and half threw it in the crib, watching it grovel in little motions of pain as he stood above it, silent, white lipped in anger, tense.

He filled the hot water bottle in the bathroom. The noise was worse there. The sound was amplified somehow and seemed to fill the room. He remembered to fold a diaper over it before putting it in the crib and tried to get it under the writhing form. But it kept sliding out from under. Panting with rage and the exertion, he gave up, and sat down in the chair to wait. I wish you had died when you were born, he muttered viciously. I wish I had never seen you or your mother. I wish you'd scream your goddam brains out, or burst a blood vessel or hold your breath and strangle. He began walking around the room, trying to regain his composure. He was rocking the crib now as he walked. In desperation they had replaced the crib wheels with springs so they could rock it when there was nothing left to do. The rocking didn't help much either, but it was better to do something than just listen to it, and they both pretended that the rocking cut down the noise, a little anyway.

He tried the bottle again, but without any more success. After a few seconds of sucking, the howling began, even worse this time, and when he tried to jam the bottle into the mouth the screams grew so bad he had to quit, and he banged the bottle down on the floor so hard that little spider-like cracks appeared around the bottom edge with their legs reaching upwards. He felt surrounded by the noise, trapped by screams, and there was no way out, no way to stop it. Stop it! he screamed out loud, frightening himself by the harshness of his

voice, and the loudness of his cry. He listened for a moment, but there was no sound from the bed room.

He noticed the blanket draped over the headboard of the crib, and mechanically took it down. Harriet had warned him about leaving things on the sides of the crib, they might get pulled into the crib and cause trouble, she had said. He watched the hands, waving, groping for help against the evil raging in its vitals, scratching the sheet, the walls of the crib, anything in reach. He too reached out, and put the blanket within reach, just to see what would happen.

He felt a little exhilarated now, as if something were going to happen, as if he might be going to see a spectacle of some sort. The hot water bottle had been nudged off to the side, and the agonized hands played about it, finally reaching the blanket and closing upon it with that tight moist clasp. He sat down in the chair, closed his eyes for a moment, then opened them with a start and stood up. Nothing had happened, of course. The screaming had settled down now to an even wailing, as if hopeless despair had replaced the tormented hope of relief. The hands clutched the blanket in the same place, the legs kicked out in pain. He sat down again, rocking the crib with his foot.

This time he felt himself dozing off, and only half resisted. Nothing can happen, he told himself. Besides the screaming never stops, never can stop. He had to force himself to keep rocking now, and he stopped for longer periods of time. The howling, still pain-wracked, had settled into a pattern, like a broken record. He heard a slight noise from the bedroom—Harriet was turning over—and he heard a relaxed sigh, and in front of his closed eyes he saw her face, not tense and drawn as it always was now, but relaxed and quiet, even beautiful and full as it was in those last days of pregnancy.

He woke with a jolt again. Had the screaming stopped? He stood up violently, overturning the chair in his panic. The blanket was crumpled and pulled tight around the red face. He pulled it away, scarcely breathing, and flung it on the floor, where

it knocked over the cracked bottle. The hands clutched hard for the blanket, and, after a pause of—how long?—the agonized scream came again, and the legs kicked out in protest. He let out a long breath, and pulled the robe close about him, shivering.

He held the baby on his lap, rocking her softly, talking quietly. This time she took the bottle, sucking eagerly, stopping every now and again for an anguished cry, but returning almost in the middle for more sucking. After two ounces were gone, he picked her up, walking around the room once more, waiting for the bubble. I'm sorry, baby, he muttered. You didn't ask for this any more than I did. Maybe if you get it now you won't get it later. He held the baby close. I'm sorry, he said.

He laid her in the crib again and watched quietly. The screams were a little different now. He looked at his watch. 4:30. Jesus, he said. The screaming had all but stopped.

He got into bed, and moved close to his wife. She partly woke up. He told her the time, and she asked, sleepily, 'Did she . . . ?' "No, not much, tonight," he lied. "We did all right tonight."



18 POETS

RICHARD EMIL BRAUN

IRVING FELDMAN

DONALD HALL

LESLIE WOOLF HEDLEY

PATRICIA HOOPER

RICHARD F. HUGO

DONALD JUSTICE

ERNEST KROLL

MALCOLM LOWRY

THOMAS MCAFEE

JOHN MONTAGUE

HOWARD NEMEROV

PAUL B. NEWMAN

CHARLES PHILBRICK

RICHARD C. RAYMOND

JOHN TAYLOR

REED WHITTEMORE

ROBLEY C. WILSON

• MALCOLM LOWRY

FOUL ACAPULCO

Shakespeare should have come to Acapulco;
Here he would have found a timeless hell.
He who leaves all, Dean Donne said, doth as well—
(There is no rhyme for foul Acapulco,
Nor reason, expletive, save—Acapulco!)
—As he who eats, devours. He would scarcely have left all
Fruits here in this seascape in a bottle!
—(Or escape into a million!)—quotes: Wells Fargo.
Paraiso de Caleta, seduce him to your bed!
Suppose it. He would have held no horses,
Written no plays. What creditor wants verses?
—Globe? No Globe here, not a scenical sound.
All that could have been said is what Marston said:
Rich happiness that such a son is drowned.

YOU THINK YOU ARE A MAN

—You think you are a man shaking the hands of that dog
Like that, but I hate you.
Nor do I like the manly way in which you poke that log,
Nor will I imitate you.

The truth is you wouldn't have shaken that dog's paw like that
If you hadn't seen Bruce do it.
Nor would you dress as you do or bang doors like that
—Well, a truce to it.

Nevertheless, I shall go on,—because Bruce wouldn't do things
as he does either
If it hadn't been for that O. C. of his during the war.

Neither would that O. C. of his have behaved as he did, neither
Would whoever it was *he* saw

Do something in a way that impressed him when young.
It seems to me, no one behaves quite as he might
If he had sprung up naked in this world alone among
Stones, with no fool in sight.

HYPOCRITE! OXFORD GROUPER! YAHOO!

Six demons came and cut down three tall trees
Next to our shack, one windy Saturday
With neither damn your eyes nor if you please.

I asked them if our float was in the way.
They laughed without replying, cleared the brush,
Tore our path into a chaos of skewed planks

And in the midst of all this strange onrush
Inconsistent, borrowed our boat with thanks.

—Well, that was disarming about the boat
As it was maddening about the path.

When they had gone I stood upon our float
Beyond the ruined steps, forcing my wrath
To love those rough neighbours, casting my pride
With pines face downward in the flooding tide.

For George Finckel

In the first place,
I never knew the two of them were angels:
No wings, no radiance. I thought they might be students
Going from town to town, seeing the country.
I said "Come in the house, we'll have a drink,
Some supper, why not stay the night?" They did.
The only oddity was they didn't bother
With evening prayers, and that made me suspect
They might be Somebody. But in my home town
It doesn't take much; before I thought it out
People were coming round beating the door:
"Who you got in the house, let's have a party."
It was a pretty nice town in those days,
With always something going on, a dance
Or a big drunk with free women, or boys

For those who wanted boys, in the good weather
We used to play strip poker in the yard.
But just then, when I looked at those young gents,
I had a notion it was not the time,
And shouted through the door, "Go home, we're tired."
Nobody went. But all these drunks began
To pound the door and throw rocks at the windows
And make suggestions as to what they might do
When they got hold of the two pretty young men.
Matters were getting fairly desperate
By this time, and I said to those outside,
"Look, I got here my two daughters, virgins
Who never been there yet. I send them out,
Only my guests should have a peaceful night."
That's how serious the situation was.
Of course it wasn't the truth about the kids,
Who were both married, and, as a matter of fact,
Not much better than whores, and both the husbands
Knocking their horns against the chandeliers
Of my own house—but still, it's what I said.
It got a big laugh out there, and remarks,
Till the two young men gave me a nice smile
And stretched out one hand each, and suddenly
It got pitch dark outside, people began
Bumping into each other and swearing; then
They cleared away and everything was quiet.
So one young man opens his mouth, he says,
"You've got till sunrise, take the wife and kids
And the kids' husbands, and go. Go up to the hills."
The other says, "The Lord hath sent us to
Destroy this place" and so forth and so forth.
You can imagine how I felt. I said,
"Now look, now after all . . ." and my wife said,
"Give me a few days till I pack our things,"
And one of them looked at his watch and said,
"It's orders, lady, sorry, you've got till dawn."

THE CARLETON MISCELLANY

I said, "Respectfully, gentlemen, but who
Lives in the hills? I've got to go, so why
Shouldn't I go to Zoar, which is a nice
Town with a country club which doesn't exclude
Jews?" "So go to Zoar if you want," they said.
"Whatever you do, you shouldn't look back here."
We argued all night long. First this, then that.
My son-in-laws got into the act: "You're kidding,
Things of this nature simply do not happen
To people like us." I said, "These here are angels,
But suit yourselves." The pair of them said, "We'll stay,
Only deed us the house and furniture."
"I wouldn't deed you a dead fish," I said,
"Besides, I'm going to take the girls along."
"So take," they said, "they weren't such a bargain."
The two visitors all this time said nothing,
They might as well not have been there. But I
Believed what I was told, and this, I think,
Makes all the difference—between life and death,
I mean — to feel sincerely that there's truth
In something, even if it's God knows what.
My poor old woman felt it too, that night,
She only couldn't hold it to the end.
The girls just packed their biggest pocketbooks
With candy and perfume; they'd be at home
Most anywhere, even in a hill.

At last

I knelt down and I spoke to my God as follows:
"Dear Sir," I said, "I do not understand
Why you are doing this to my community,
And I do not understand why, doing it,
You let me out. There's only this one thing,
So help me, that with all my faults I do
Believe you are able to do whatever you say
You plan to do. Myself, I don't belong
In any operation on this scale,

I've always been known here as a nice fellow,
Which is low enough to be or want to be:
Respectfully I ask to be let go
To live out my declining years at peace
In Zoar with my wife and the two kids
Such as they are. A small house will do.
Only I shouldn't be part of history."
Of course no one answered. One of them said:
"If you're about through, please get on your feet,
It's time to go." My daughter's gorgeous husbands
Were drinking on the porch before we left.

II

My relative Abraham saw it happen: the whole
Outfit went up in smoke, he said. One minute
There was the town, with banks and bars and grilles
And the new sewage disposal plant, all looking
(he said) terribly innocent in the first light;
Then it ignited. It went. All those old pals
Gone up, or maybe down. I am his nephew,
Maybe you know, he had troubles himself,
With the maid, and his own son. That's neither here
Nor there. We'd been forbidden to look, of course,
But equally of course my old girl had to look.
She turned around, and in one minute there
She was, a road sign or a mileage marker.
By this time, though, I knew that what we were in
Was very big, and I told the kids Come on.
We didn't stop to cry, even. Also
We never went to Zoar. I began to think
How real estate was high, how I'd been told
To go up in the hills, and how I'd always
Wanted to live in the country, a gentleman
Like Abraham, maybe, and have my flocks
Or whatever you call them—herds. Well, I found out.

THE CARLETON MISCELLANY

A cave, we lived in, a real cave, out of rock.
I envied those bums my son-in-laws, until
I remembered they were dead. And the two girls,
My nutsy kids, getting the odd idea
That the whole human race had been destroyed
Except for us, conceived—this word I love,
Conceived—the notion that they should be known
In carnal union by their poppa. Me.
Poor dear old Dad. Most any man might dream
About his daughters; darling and stupid chicks
As these ones were, I'd dreamed, even in daytime,
Such brilliant dreams. But they? They bought some booze,
Having remembered to bring money along,
Something I never thought of, considering
I was in the hand of God, and got me boiled.
And then—I'm told—on two successive nights
Arrived on my plain stone couch and—what shall I say?
Had me? I was completely gone at the time,
And have no recollection. But there they were,
The pair of them, at the next moon, knocked up,
And properly, and by their Dad. The kids
Turned out to be boys, Moab and Ben-Ammi
By name. I have been given to understand
On competent authority that they will father
A couple of peoples known as Moabites
And Ammonites, distinguished chiefly by
Heathenish ways and ignorance of the Law.
And I did this? Or this was done to me,
A foolish man who lived in the grand dream
One instant, at the fuse of miracle and
The flare of life, a man no better than most,
Who loves the Lord and does not know His ways,
Neither permitted the pleasure of his sins
Nor punished for them, and whose ageing daughters
Bring him his supper nights, and clean the cave.

• PAUL B. NEWMAN

SOUTH ATLANTIC

In the pellucid fragrances of being
That turn and hesitate upon an arrow,
Wind-vane, feather in the ocean air,
The high intoxication of wind-drinking
Falls to nereids, wind-drinking nereids.
Why wince, whine and wail about it?
Or idly burn for symbols, tallies of
That unconcern the laws of Calvin
Or the air of Maine engendered?
Symbols are this tone of wind-drenched light,
A smoke of clouds like history,
A cocktail glass, white flannels, teasing eyes,
And hairs bleached golden by the sun.
Moved by the beauty of this atmosphere
To waken, wandering in a maze
Of startled thoughts, reflections, shaken
By this unconcern, we hesitate
And stumble to the sea's edge, swimmers
In the dense salt air, the warm salt flood.

• CHARLES PHILBRICK

LATE SUMMER WISDOM

A wiser man than I might take all summer long
Observing every custom of the shorebirds,
Stalking wide marshes with printless gaze
And scanning skies without scarring; accepting
The sand-shined sunlight presented by oakleaves;
Disturbing salt water as little as man-body can.

A wise man indeed would spend his summer's senses
Recording the minor drifts in color of marshgrass
From leaf-green to beach-bright in altering air;
Respecting the blacksnake, limber of tail and tongue,
And admiring the marsh-hawk's blunt, heraldic wing;
Honoring moon to the full in such robes of her ocean—

The night-wisest also know that high wisdom lies
In lying on suppliant sand to the splendid sun,
Tolerant of gulls in loud auctions of herring,
Diverted by sea-swallows', shearwaters' sweeps
Absolving wind from wave; and in thinning with care
The shellfish and berries that straddle our shore.

And even a foolisher man than I think I've been
Could not regret a seasoned summer's-length of life
Spent visiting this body and enlivening this flesh
To blossom ripe all winter long. Though autumn fall
Upon me, I shall plant until I'm reaped. My love,
Much wiser men than I might make all summers long.

• JOHN MONTAGUE

THE MUMMER SPEAKS

In some country parishes in Ireland the mummers go from house to house during the twelve days of Christmas, enacting their doggerel dramas.

“God save our shadowed lands
Stalked by this night beast of the dead
—Turnip roundness of the skull,
Sockets smouldering in the head —
Will no St. George or Patrick come,
Restore to us our once blessed
And blossoming, now barren home?”

He paused on the threshold,
Clashed his sword of wood,
His swinging lantern on the snow
Threw blood-red circles where he stood;
Herded listeners numbly gaped
Like goslings, as if they understood.

Bold as brass, a battering knight
Came roaring through the door,
Bussed the ladies on his right,
Smashed the devil to the floor.
Justice triumphed there and then
With straw, like guts, strewn everywhere:
False Satan struts no more.

A scene in farmhouse darkness,
Two wearing decades ago;
Of which I best recall
The faces like listening animals,
A stormlamp swinging to and fro,
And, of all those creaking rustic rhymes,
That purging lament of bad times.

POISONED LANDS

"Four good dogs dead in one night
And a rooster, scaly legs in the air,
Beak in the dust, a terrible sight!"
Behind high weathered walls, his share
Of local lands, the owner skulks
Or leaves in dismal guttering gaps
A trail of broken branches, roots,
Bruised by his mournful rubber boots.

Neighbours sight him as a high hat
Dancing down hedges, a skeletal shape
Night-haloed with whistling bats,
Or silhouetted against cloudy skies,
Coat turned briskly to the nape,
Sou'westered in harsh surmise.

"Children dawdling home from Mass
Chased a bouncing ball and found,
Where he had stood, scorched tufts of grass,
Blighted leaves"—and here the sound
Of rodent Gossip sank—"worse by far,
Dark radiance as though a star
Had disintegrated, a clinging stench
Gutting the substances of earth and air."
At night, like baleful shadowed eyes,
His windows show the way to cars
Igniting the dark like fireflies.
Gusts of song and broken glass
Prelude wild triumphal feasts
Climaxed by sacrifice of beasts.

Privileged, I met him on an evening walk,
Inveigled him into casual weather talk.

"I don't like country people" he said, with a grin
The winter sunlight halved his mottled chin
And behind, a white notice seemed to swing and say:
"If you too licked grass, you'd be dead to-day."

• THOMAS McAFEE

WOMAN OF ANOTHER TIME

Ladies, she said, and gentlemen never chew gum.
Ladies never whistle, she said, nor do gentlemen hum.
I think of this these million miles away
In time. I check the Birmingham Airport sky. What would
 she say
About the jet Electra there
Rubbing its nose to the wind? Or care?
She who would not go up—nor near water—and not into
 Mammoth Cave!
Still, she checked off the ones who would, and gave
Each one his check, against or for
His valor, but not in terms of water or wings or caves
 or even war.
Rather, in terms of chewing gum, of saying thank you please,
Of whistling—these
Were her tests of whether man defied the dust or not.
Indecorous, he might fly to the moon and come back, and
 still rot.

• ERNEST KROLL

SELF-POSSESSION

Though civilizations burn,
And men set in their fury
The earth to doom careening,
Yet little the cause for alarm
If one could only assume
The imperious unconcern
Of a white duck by a farm
Pond I saw near Bucklin, Missouri,
Quirking its tail and preening.

STATION STOP

The slowing window, like a roulette wheel,
Stopped at one of many chances, framing
A southwest Kansas family seeing off
The children and grandchildren in a car.
All the shuttling to and fro, the hubbub
Of preparing to depart, the gestures of
Affection as they visited each other,
Looking in the eyes and kissing, all were there,
Checked over by a crook-backed matriarch
Who suddenly seized the back of her leg and scratched
Without a care who watched; without a care
The others scratching, too, between the kissing
And the stowing and the shuttling to and fro,
As if to scratch in that dry country and
Dusty air were naturally done as breathing.
Mind you, I was in my railroad cell sealed off
As in a bathysphere among the fish,

As near to them as God, and it was odd,
I tell you, it was mighty, mighty odd
That, sealed off in the shadows as I was,
Watching that framed extravaganza's
Acting out, I found my hand upon my neck,
Scratching away.

Itching is catching in Kansas

HIGH PLAINS

Rails in the wheat run straight
To the skyline, where,
If pole and crosstrees lean a hair
From plumbline, it is clear
For miles, for there the planet set
A smooth cheek to the air.

• RICHARD F. HUGO

THE BLONDE ROAD

This road dips and climbs but never bends.
The line it finally is, strings far beyond
My sight, still the color of useless dirt.
Trees are a hundred greens in varying light
As sky breaks black on silver over and in
The sea. Not one home or car. No shacks
Abandoned to the storms. On one side,
Miles of high grass; on the other, weather
And the sea reflecting tons of a wild day.

The wind is from Malay. Tigers in the wind
Make lovers claw each other orange. Blonde
Dirt rises to recite the lies of summer
Before the wind goes north and cats rip
White holes in the sky. Fields are grim
And the birds along this road are always stone.

I planned to cheat the road with laughter.
Build a home no storm could crack
And sing my Fridays over centuries of water—
Once more, have me back, my awkward weather—
But the land is not for sale. Centuries
Are strung: a blonde road north and south
And no man will improve it with macadam.

The road is greased by wind. Sun has turned
The blonde dirt brown, the brown grass
Black and the dark ideas of the ocean
Silver. Each month rolls along the road
With an hour's effort, Now the lovers
Can't recall each other or identify
That roar: the northern pain of tigers.

I know that just a word I'll never have
Could make the brown road blonde again
And send the stone birds climbing to their names.

• ROBLEY CONANT WILSON

NOTES OF A BLIND NUDIST

I know what I hate. You think you'd despise
The filthiness of a place where the men
And women bare themselves, their flesh — well then,
Consider: I'm right in with them, my eyes
Can't be offended, but my soul? Ask me
How much obscenity fills up my thought
And pains my spirit here. You say I ought
To get away from them? Ought to break free?

But don't forget: a blind man has small chance
In a late age, in a hard world like yours.
I'm getting old, there's not much money — more's
The shame for that — I wouldn't have the sense
To stay alive out there. How would I keep
Myself? Passing a cup? No, not today;
No charity for me. I pay my way.
I hate the camp, but living's cheap.

Yes, hate it. Oh, I hear these people laugh;
I know them — what they're doing — know them all.
It knots my stomach up, makes my skin crawl
Thinking of it. You can't imagine half.
Picture yourself swimming, and some nude slut
Comes toward you in the water with her breasts
Floating ahead of her. . . . You guess the rest.
I swear I'd like to leave this whorehouse, but —

Well, I'm not near as spry as years ago;
The taxicabs and motorbikes and, hell,
A kiddie-car would be enough to kill
Me dead. I wouldn't have a dog, you know;
They smell and you can't trust them. Then my hands
Are kind of fumbly: buttons give me fits,
And laces. I'm no kind of man who sits
Helpless, mooning how no one understands.

Yes, yes, I've thought of clearing out of here,
Away from this pest-hole of lechery,
Especially these last few months. Let me
Tell you something — make sure nobody's near.
There's this young girl that reads to me, soft voice,
Reeking of sex, flaunting her body so.
Damn it, I wasn't always blind, you know.
Teasing me like I was one of her boys.

At least I've got my health. I take a lot
Of sun and I expect I've got a tan
That's pretty good. And not many a man
At my age would be strong as me. I'm not
Bragging, but I do keep myself in gear —
Swim underwater, too. How's that for blind
And getting on in years? I keep my mind
Clean; that's a lot more than the others here.

Oh, I'd like to get out. I have bad dreams,
All arms and legs and bellies thrashing in
A bed as big as Hades, crashing in
And wrecking my sleep time. Sometimes it seems
An awful cross to bear. It's hard for me.
I wear this cane to stay respectable,
Keep my mouth shut and stay out of trouble.
Life might be easier if I could see.

ROBLEY C. WILSON

SCULPTOR

Get me a block of good
Big as God
And I with militant hands
Will turn it into a man
Better than those
The preachers yammer at.

Oh, hell.
Too big to bring in
Through the studio door.

Get me a smaller block.

● BY RICHARD C. RAYMOND

REVELATION

O mygod am I the domestic!
little commuter sit on my tail
group thinker
slogan dispenser
tonicked and filtered
packaged and priced;
I wind the clock
the clock winds me
to paint a ceiling kill a weed
and Saturday to plant a seed.

TOWN DRUNK

Jim Brennan, lanky old man undone,
dirty stubble on chin and cheek,
lay down on the horse dung dust
at the fallen end of a lurching week
in a dry cool stall of the carriage shed,
half hidden in back of the church,
with a buggy cushion to hold his head.

Spreadeagled, yellow-toothed and grinning,
he gurgled and cackled, whistled, blew
and reached for a bottle out of reach,
unmindful of fat tomatoes spinning
to speckle the planks with seeds,
unmindful of hoots and hollers from boys
who stalked like Indians thru the weeds

Had for himself a merry young time,
busting with laughter, batting an eye,
he jigged a foot, he slapped a thigh
or sang in Irish songs for the Devil,
and fumbled at boys who came on dares
to squat on their heels and observe
the man their elders said was evil.

Sobered, he sat on the town hall steps,
sucking a stem of grass,
his blood as thin, his tongue as lost
as bugle calls in the Khyber Pass:
recruit, deserter, ne'er-do-well,
he crouched alone in a hulk of bone
and stared at the never-dead in Hell.

• LESLIE WOOLF HEDLEY

THE SPEED OF YOUTH

Language leaps like a train
deep into dark weathers of land.
We touched quick hands for a second,
shifted our human gears,
felt jolts of time brake us
with stop & go hurdy-gurdys of conversation.

There was a burning mutiny in our bones
and our impatient tongues clacked
ceaseless blunders of traffic.

We were young rapidly.
We spoke in gestures of haste,
without mirrors or chalices to guide
the furious blossoming of our Spring.

Today
icicles hang their white damnation,
decorating our brows without accomplishment.
We have toppled no kingdoms.
The air remains frozen and betrayed.
The stars still ask
silent questions like threatening guns.

TO ALL THOSE WHO COMPOSED TRAGIC ODES
ON THE UNTIMELY DEATH OF DYLAN THOMAS

He did not die for romantic reasons as you think,
but from having too damned much alcohol to drink.

• JOHN TAYLOR

CONTRIBUTOR'S NOTE

September twelfth, 1931,
The doctor said that I had come too soon;
My mother tried to feed a shrunken son
Till I licked lukewarm Karo from a spoon;
Bent by the natal forceps out of tune,
My head was pointed like a piece of pie
Until they wondered if my goatish cry
Would ever turn to words, but brains are tough,
And soon, although my skull continued wry,
My parents found I babbled quite enough.

Now here I sit: my age is twenty-eight,
My state is married, with as yet no child,
Head balding, belly barely overweight;
This is my world, and I am reconciled,
Though never to the point of turning mild;
When I fall down I merely sit and grin
And bear the minor scars upon my skin,
Smirk in a way that's nearly Japanese,
Apologetic to my fellow men;
I came too early and must try to please.

• DONALD HALL

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

1. MacAndrews can prove to anyone
by thirty-seven different arguments
each in itself conclusive
that his poems are superb.
There is no possible reply
to his critical demonstration
except to read one of his poems.
2. MacDonald has asked for an honest opinion.
MacDonald will receive one.
We will hear no more from MacDonald.
3. MacMillan wishes us to know
that he has just begun to write poems.
In fact, these are the first humble lucubrations
of his inferior pen, and so on.
If one does not totally believe
in the protestations of his poems —
“I smell the golden angels of despair” —
one believes in the sincere
accuracy of his note to the editor.
4. MacTubb wants criticism.
If one should say, “MacTubb, your metaphors
are clichés, your rhythm is dead,
and your rhymes are forced,”
MacTubb would smile in perfect knowledge
and say, “That is just what I intended.”

EATING

Why do I eat so much when I am not hungry?
I *know* it is disgusting.
I *know* it makes me disgustingly fat.
Eating is what will kill me in five years
at the age of thirty-seven.
So young. "If only he had not eaten so much,"
my friends will say,
"he would never have caught Heart Cancer.
It is too bad he ate so much."
I agree. I am depressed.
I am so depressed I make myself
a peanut butter sandwich with mayonnaise.
Oh, I will get fatter and fatter
for five years.
Is food a surrogate for the breast of my mother?
It is true that I smoke cigars as well.
It is true that I write poems as well,
which Dr. A. A. Brill calls the chewing and mouthing
of beautiful words.
Or am I by eating acquiring material
for my other hobby, which is disposing of it?
Whatever it is, I will never know what it is.
Oh, it is deeply depressing
to be unable to modify one's behavior
according to the recommendations of reason.
I think I will go eat some dinners.

• DONALD JUSTICE

ANONYMOUS DRAWING

A delicate young Negro stands
With the reins of a horse clutched loosely in his hands;
So delicate, indeed, that we wonder if he can hold the spirited
creature beside him
Until the master shall arrive to ride him.
Already the animal's nostrils widen with rage or fear.
But if we imagine him snorting, about to rear,
This boy, who should know about such things better than we,
Only stands smiling, passive and ornamental, in a fantastic livery
Of ruffles and puffed breeches,
Watching the artist, apparently, as he sketches.
Meanwhile the petty lord who must have paid
For the artist's trip up from Perugia, for the horse, for the boy,
for everything here, in fact, has been delayed,
Kept too long by his steward, perhaps, discussing
Some business concerning the estate, or fussing
Over the details of his impeccable toilet
With a manservant whose opinion is that any alteration at all
would spoil it.
However fast he should come hurrying now
Over this vast greensward, mopping his brow
Clear of the sweat of the fine Renaissance morning, it would be
too late.
The artist will have had his revenge for being made to wait,
A revenge not only necessary but right and clever—
Simply to leave him out of the scene forever.

• IRVING FELDMAN

THE SAGE UNDER THE GROUND*

1. *How I Live*

They come to me, they say,
Wise man, tell us how you live.
O I would answer, Like the tree.
I take nourishment and thrive.

With what wry complement of tones
I and the soaring poplar say,
I couldn't live as I do
If I didn't do it every day!

2. *Who I Am*

"Who are you?" by ants, worms, and other
Of my devoted I'm asked *ad infinitum*.
"He alone," I say, 'in all this world
Who could bear to be the being I am."

Which definition I proffer one and all
As being true—though, maybe, I fear,
More than lovers, easy under
Each other's burdens, can safely bear.

3. *My Doorway*

When tired of this heavy world,
I lift the door and step outside
And look up at all that emptiness
Long ago leaked from my side.

All night, all day, I see
The sun abandon,
The moon abandon,
The stars go off.

4. *My Album*

My Favorite Flower Is: the Red Rose.
My Favorite Occupation Is: Repose.
My Favorite Game: Articulation.
My Favorite Fear: Suffocation.
When I Grow Up I Want To Be: the Same,
Only endlessly and more fascinatingly more so!
My Favorite Element Is: Earth.
My Ultimate Aim
Is (without further ado):
Rebirth.

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• REED WHITTEMORE

OUR RUINS

Our ruins are not ambitious yet, mostly.
Except for a couple of Williamsburgs they age
In the grass and thistle of waste country
Where nobody who would rebuild or tear down comes to rage
At what is unsafe, unAmerican, unsightly.

The small silent mills are the solemnest — squat, square,
With a thickness of wall and an air of social stability
That the fishermen in their hook-and-fly hats from the city
Take to be clear
Evidence that the Greeks or Romans have been here.

But the square-eyed farms in death have their dignity too,
Where the myth of the fixed point, the still center
In all this surge and wash, this flux and flow
Has been gelded again and again, over and over,
As each agrarian buries his deathless hoe.

And now, as the country's thoroughfares widen and stiffen,
Soft little cultures with country store, gas pump, crossway,
Depot (long-closed) and a weedy, rusted siding
Display some of the virtues of long-term decay
Without the agrarians even moving away.

Antiquity doesn't matter. In but a decade
An empty house can gain centuries, and old mills
Can lure the bright trout and slim pike for miles and miles
To swim in the depths by their old walls by falls
Or lurk in their rotten wheelways, savoring the shade.

THE CULTURAL CONFERENCE

The author, critic and cultural messenger (me)
Comes to the cultural conference with snap-on tie,
Two shirts and a briefcase; and in between drinks
Holds forth for a week on the state of the state
Of letters —

that is, takes stock.

He finds science doing its best and wishes that artists
Would pay some attention to thermodynamics.
He doubts that our age will go down in the books for its verse,
But hopes for the novel. He thinks there is room
For a new vital form of some sort — the novella? —
And wonders if any mass culture, even our own,
Can really sustain a high art, thinking that paperbacks
Help. Lastly he knows it is late and the room is stuffy,
But if anyone really wishes to, he would be more than. There-
upon,

Asked if he thinks that the modern poets are difficult,
Or that writers should be depressing, defeatist or dirty,
He smiles, looks at his watch, hunches over the lectern
And recites (for another half hour) (with lengthy asides)
Passages out of the Great Tradition from Chaucer
To (with suitably deprecatory sniffles) himself, *simply to show*
— Uh, would the lady repeat the question? Thereupon
She does and he firmly agrees and everyone breaks up
And the week goes insanely on and he leaves at the end of it
Alone on a plane for home where, arriving, he'll take

Another week, of a cultural silence profound,
Getting used to the hardship of having himself (me) around.

• RICHARD EMIL BRAUN

CATFISH-FISHING

Is it a likely thing, I wondered, That that
nine year waif who dangles a lemon
yellow plastic boat from the wharf is thinking
the words he says are astonishing
to the fat man and tired wife nodding
there, where the sun is heaviest?

He knows the words can be only a flutter
but he thinks those two are straining
to understand, muttered the fisherman
in the shade beside me, And have
to pretend to him they are not concerned
with the precious commentary.

He thinks both ways by turns and between times
he is angry to be wrong by turns
and angry you and you need not explain
your tackle, the fisherman's twelve year
old son said, eager to repudiate
his own childhood through betrayal.

THE PHYSICAL MOTIVE

An empty oriel seen from the road
sets me imagining a forlorn mansion
with powdery rugs gone mossy near the wall
pocked where the old time chair and table stood;
but let me see a lampshade or a rank
of knickknacks along the window and I
begin envisioning the rooms chockfull
of stuffs and furniture, and never think

till later that within this rim of objects
some other people are staring across
another gap into a subtle further
border of vacant household zones which relicts
are moved now wearily to occupy
and now to shun by much the same illusions
as I have had along an unfamiliar
road and through a pink and unfeeling eye.

• PATRICIA HOOPER

MY GRANDFATHER TAUGHT ME TO FEAR BEARS

My grandfather taught me to fear bears,
their claws like iron, their teeth like nails,
who fought in the thickets under the owls,
tossing the kings to their evil lair,
and ate little girls who were not good.

I thought of their ghost-green home in the thickets,
their deadly caves where the owls glistened,
the powerful princes stamped in the underbrush;
and ate my meals as I should, fearing
bears that broke little girls in their black hug.

And, at the park where there were no owls,
their lumbering children romped in the cages,
their paws like cushions, their legs like comfort;
who never bothered the bread I tossed them,
or the cruel men, prodding their play, like kings.

THE MAN WHO KNEW WHAT ETHIOPIA
SHOULD DO ABOUT HER WATER-TABLE

By H. E. F. DONOHUE

It took him a little time to realize something in the bar was wrong because he was wondering what he was doing there and he had been thinking about the ticket agent and what she had said. "Sorry your stay was so short, Mr. Brian." she had said, banging the big stapler. Whuump! "Your bus leaves for the field in fifty minutes, Mr. Brian." she had said, handing him a paper ticket pouch. And when Brian had asked where he could buy something to read, the girl had wagged her head, No. Add the flash of grin.

"A cup of coffee, then?" Brian had said.

"Much too late." Both had turned to the clock. Twelve-oh-ten. "But the bar is still open I believe," she had said.

Brian had turned to peer across the expanse of empty airline terminal. Concealed lights formed endless paths on the pretend marble floor that seemed the size of Madison Square Garden. But for those lights, and the tiny floods above the agent's head transforming her with her swept-back black hair into one round white brow, San Francisco's huge air terminal was dark and hollow, echoing, bare.

"But," he had told the brow, "it is all dark over there."

"You are the last to check out tonight," the brow had replied, nodding. "And on the last flight out."

"Great," Brian had said, hoisting his portable and his briefcase, walking across the vast flat space past the empty curved benches and the hooded stands, beyond the shuttered stalls, hearing as he walked dim remote city sounds from outside somewhere, wondering why it was silly for such a city to have no snow on such a holiday, wondering why it mattered so much, or at all. He had found the bar. After he had found it, after he had gone in, he had wondered why the ticket agent had bothered him and why he was in the bar, this bar, any bar, after not having been in one for more than three years.

"Yes, sir?" the bartender said.

"A tonic and lime," Brian told him. "And no gin."

"Right." But he stopped to think about it. Then he turned to his utensils on the little lighted shelf beneath the bar, while Brian looked about the bar, surprised to find anyone else there, at that time in that place, and then surprised, alerted by the sense that something was wrong.

It was a very small bar, a small square bar with three or four high cushioned stools on each of three sides. The fourth side was a mirrored wall stacked with glasses and bottles standing on glass shelves. Brian stood between two stools on the left side. Across from him, beyond the bending bartender, was a pretty girl with pretty hair listening to a man whisper her something. Brian could not see much of the man's face, nor could he hear what he was saying. Whatever it was, it was something she wanted to hear, for she was leaning on one elbow, her head close to his, her hand in her hair, smiling at him warily, happily, in complete disbelief.

The two others in the bar were not talking. They were facing the mirror. Their backs were to the door through which Brian had walked, and now he could see that one was a young man wearing rimless glasses, sitting up straight before a high-stemmed glass that sat on a coaster, and an ash tray. The other

was an older man in a brown suit, who was smiling at the top of the bending bartender's head. Nothing was on the bar in front of him.

"Yes, sir," the bartender said again, wheeling before Brian with tight gracelessness to slap a small round white quilted paper coaster down and centering the moist drink upon it, grimacing once, giving Brian the tolerant grin. Brian nodded back, noting that the short bartender was about his age, in the mid-thirties, and that he looked it even with the blond crew-cut and the sharp thin blonde mustache. His nose had been broken and well repaired. And he had the Heidelberg scar in the right place, forming on the cheek the slanting dimple. He also had the widest set of shoulders Brian had ever seen. A tailored white shirt. Black string bow-tie. No apron. Black flannels pressed sharp dropped straight down from his concrete gut. And from the way he moved inside the shirt, inside the bar, suddenly, swiftly, to flick off a speck of dust here, to rub away a glint of gloss there, Brian decided he had not got the dimple nor the nose at Heidelberg.

"I'll say," the bartender said, turning away, ignoring Brian, not noticing the dollar Brian had put upon the bar, turning to speak to the young man who sat stolidly beside the older one. The bartender had exhaled too heavily and he had spoken to the young man as if they had not been interrupted, as if they were never going to be. "I'll say," he said again, shaking his head thoughtfully. "They can be real tough, I know. I remember being in a small scrape once, a real nothing, and the other driver claimed he hurt his back. Lordy."

"Yes," the young man said, massaging his cigarette into shreds with his rotating thumb, smiling, moving only the corners of his mouth.

"And for a few days there," the bartender said, "for two whole days I did not know whether or not my insurance covered me for that sort of thing."

"Yes," the young man said. "I know."

THE CARLETON MISCELLANY

Then the older man spoke. "Actually," he told the bartender, "a mere five should suffice."

"For two whole days," the bartender told the young man, "I sweated let me tell you."

"Same thing," the young man replied, "very same thing happened to me coming up from Palo Alto."

"Might need the five," the old man told the bartender, "for the chute, you know." He beamed. "The parachute."

"What happened?" the bartender asked the young man. "Tell me. Tell me."

"I was stopping for this light," the young man replied, "and my Jag hit a small stone. And that stone — it was more of a pebble really — that stone chipped into a store window nearby and the cop stopped me when the owner ran out screaming about how I was going to get sued."

"Yes," the bartender said.

"I wonder if I am covered for that," the young man said.

"Yes," the bartender said, concentrating on him.

"With that chute," the old man quietly told the bartender, "I am golden."

Brian had sipped his drink. Now he put it down. "Say," he said.

"Sir?" the bartender said.

"There's gin in this," Brian said. He pointed at his drink.

"But," the bartender began, "you ordered —" Then he said, "I am sorry, sir. I am very sorry."

Brian shrugged.

"Did not know, sir," the bartender said as he threw the drink into the sink, "did not know you didn't drink."

Brian thought about that for a while. Then he said, "I drink. I drink tonic and lime."

"Yes, sir," the bartender said.

"And when I want to go wild," Brian told him, "I drink a horse's neck."

"Yes, Sir," the bartender said.

A new napkin appeared. On it, a fresh glass. In the glass, still swirling, a long red plastic stick with a red plastic sea-horse wrapped around it.

Brian pushed the dollar bill still further into view.

The bartender saw it. "Oh, *that's* all right, Sir," he said.

"I will *pay* for it," Brian said.

"Yes, Sir," the bartender said, flicking it away, tapping the tiny cash register, putting the dollar in, taking change out, gently placing the coins on the bar in front of Brian. Brian let the coins stay.

"A compromise I say," the old man said to the bartender heartily. "I suggest the worthy deal."

But the bartender spoke only to the young man: "Like I say, always check the small print. Everything important is always there, in the small print."

The man had stopped whispering to the girl. Both were watching the bartender try to talk only to the young man.

The young man tried to help. "How do you mean?"

"I mean if it is not in the small print," the bartender said, "then it is *no* where."

"Oh," the young man said.

"And of course," the old man told the bartender, "I would only submit a sensible offer to you, with dignity."

"*No* where," the bartender told the young man. "My brother told me that, and he peddles the stuff. For a living. Fire. Life. Theft. *He* told me."

"A dignified deal," the old man said, "for all, for everyone."

"That's interesting," the young man said.

"*What* is?" the bartender asked quickly.

"That your brother sells insurance," the young man said. He smothered the remains of his cigarette. "Because my stepfather does, too."

"Yes," the bartender said, indifferently. "That is interesting."

"Dignified," the old man said, "and sure."

"He even wants *me* to go into the business," the young man said.

"Oh," the bartender said.

"Yes," the young man said.

"It is simply this," the old man said.

"But I told him No," the young man said.

"Uh-huh," the bartender said. He put out his cigarette and lighted another.

"All I need do," the old man said, "is to make the phone call and I am back home in Portland, free."

"I told him," the young man said, lighting another cigarette, "I told him I am pretty sure there is more to this world than betting a guy he won't make out."

"Um-hmm," the bartender said.

"One minor dime," the old man told him. "For the phone call. That's all. And, oh, one shot of booze, I suppose. Mere bar booze, if you prefer. To gain me succor in my quest for the words."

No one said or did anything. No one was looking at the old man. They were all looking at the bartender.

The old man added: "The right words. Have to make it pretty plausible. Six men in an alley. Doped milk. All of that. For the haughty provincials, you know."

Brian glanced at the old man. He was still concentrating on the bartender, memorizing him, so Brian took a good look. He saw that he was not too old. He was anywhere from forty to sixty. It was the way he sat that made him seem old. He sat hunched up over the bar as if he carried a broken back. A thin turkey neck came out of a pressed starched and soiled shirt collar too large. He had the kind of narrow rounded shoulders which Brian always was glad to see on tall welterweights because such shoulders usually meant there was going to be a good fight. He may have been, be, a tall man. Now he seemed prematurely bent, honed down too lean. That made him seem old. And his small red drinker's face made him seem old. His boy's button of a nose on his lined face made him seem old. His big red hands made him

seem old. So did his old long brown suit. That brown color was the oldest brown color in the whole world. And the lapels were too large and too wide and sharp and thin. Only his chin, a small chin held high up and out — the round-shouldered hooker, hands down, inviting the lead — and his big wide eyes, though ringed with fatigue, seemed anything but out-dated and over-used and bruised and old. Brian looked away. He looked at the bartender.

"I tell you all of this of course," the old man told the bartender, "and in such baroque detail, because I knew someone would sense my classical condition immediately."

The bartender briskly poured the young man's tray out, wiped it, put it back.

"And," the old man told him, "as soon as I stepped into this splendid joint, I knew that somebody was you."

He held his cigarette straight up so the ash would not fall onto the bar. His other hand was cupped under it as if prepared for another earthquake.

Without facing him, the bartender slid an ashtray over. The old man nodded once then carefully tilted the ash down into the tray so that it did not splash.

The young man tried again. "I feel the same way about real estate."

"How?" the bartender asked wearily, sipping a small glass of water. "How do you feel about land?"

"But the crusher is," the old man confided out of the corner of his mouth, "the cruel crusher is that even if I had the dime, I would still need a short jolt to make that call."

"Real estate," the young man said, "is not real, that's all."

"Because," the old man said, "I am coming out of a constant four-day haul."

"Money is real," the bartender said.

"And I have shot," the old man said, shaking his head, "I have shot seven hundred and twenty-three dollars in that dear time."

"Some times," the young man said.

"So," the old man said, "I have now got to call on my Port-

land son-in-law. Collect, don't you see. And he is one hell of a fine old woman. My daughter was a lovely thing when she was three."

"All the time," the bartender told the young man.

"That is the *only* reason," the old man said, "that I presume to cadge a drink: to deal with *his* world. And also, perhaps, to divine other possibilities, other, that is, than to call my corny kith and kin I mean. *That* is the reason I even mention the vulgar five and the parachute."

Brian saw the bartender begin to make his move. The bartender began at last to make the move to turn to face, to look directly at, the old man. Then he did. He put his hands on his hips and gave out a short snorting sigh. Then he turned and stared straight at the old man. No one else budged. They all looked at him. Sorrowfully he shook his head. Sorrowfully he spoke to the old man. "Do you know what you are?" he sorrowfully said.

With his steady smile steady and firm, eyes bright, the old man heard.

"I'll tell you what you are," the bartender said, sternly, reproachfully. "You are *really* something. That's what you are."

Respectfully, the old man's smile widened a bit. "I certainly realize how deep a chance I take with a man like you," he told the bartender, "even mentioning the free five and the chancy chute."

The bartender folded his powerful arms across his chest as if his whole body ached. His brows were down, his mouth grim. He waited. Suddenly he wheeled and punched a button on the cash register. A drawer popped out. He fingered up two coins, turned, and stepped to the bar to confront the old man, who did not flinch, did not blink.

"I will tell you what I am going to do," the bartender tightly said, snipping out the words. "I am going to do this much and absolutely no more. *There!*" He threw down one coin. "There's a dime for that phone call. And *here!*" He threw down the other. "Here's another in case the first one doesn't work."

The second dime hit the rim of the bar and stopped still. The first dime was still spinning. Everyone stared at it—a tiny roulette wheel spinning low growing lower and lower and fast and faster until it was flat and down and done.

"Very good of you," the old man said.

"Uh-huh," the bartender said. He was exhausted.

"Yes," the old man said. "But actually no surprise. I had surmised you'd comprehend my plight, considering your ken." He did not touch the coins.

"Sure," the bartender said.

"For today was the day, that lovely day," the old man said, "when I finally realized that the seven hundred was quite gone. Oh I am constantly learning the same things over and again. Besides, I gradually came to realize, as one must you know, that I had to sober up some, if only slowly and civilized, before I could begin to figure out just what had to be done."

"All right," the bartender said.

"And while I was sobering up walking around this town, I missed my flights each one. Each time I would miss my flight to Portland, Origami, and then I would go out into this cute city looking for them, for those two, the two who had helped me to stay. I missed my plane again today. Today I missed all three flights out. I was out looking for them."

"Yeah," the bartender said. "Sure."

"And I have been getting my sobriety back. But sanely of course. Slowly, sure. Which takes moola too and tonight I ran out of loot and so came here. And so home."

The bartender did not say anything.

"Each day I would remember there was a plane to catch. Paid for out of the seven hundred. And then I would get to thinking of those two and the possibility that they were out looking for me. And I would miss the plane. A curious refrain. I almost missed the plane back from my last job, from good old India. Do you know India?"

"No," the bartender said.

"Not as well," the old man said, "as you know the Islands, I suppose."

The bartender raised his eyebrows.

"Surely," the old man quickly said. "Where I worked in India you could not spend seven hundred cents. For two years I was in a place that makes Shangri-La seem like Twin Peaks."

The bartender began to wipe a glass.

"But I was rather bright about heading right home and handing over most of my fee. To my stately Portland daughter. Queen of bridge players at high tea. I gave her all but about one grand. I thought I'd need that to get the Ganges out of my mind. And I wanted to come here. I wanted to see this town which I love so well, which you can well understand."

"Yes," the bartender said.

"But a drinking man has got to watch out about remembering. Or perhaps it is the other way around. I do not recall. I only remember remembering about this town and drinking as I recalled. Now, during my tapering time, I need have an easy drink only now and then, like a horse or a fighter cooling out. As *you* would surely know about." He paused, grandly.

The bartender's massive shoulders and chest lifted and settled down. He sighed. "You are something," he said. "Do you know *that*?"

The old man maintained the smile, as if expecting little of a labored joke.

Again the bartender spoke: "I'll do this much. I'll give you the shot. One shot. And you drink it. And you take your time. Thinking about what to tell Portland. But then you go and *do* that. You call Portland. And you head home. And no more talk in this public place. I've got other customers. Okay?" The speech had him out of breath. He put a shot glass before the old man and poured it full of good whiskey.

The old man did not touch the drink. It sat before him a few inches away from his big hands, its faceted sides and surface reflecting many lights, stars of golden brown and yellow, curving

out almost down over the thick brim, tremulous yet trim. Only once did the old man let his eyes move away from the bartender's face to gaze down at the whiskey glass. Then he looked up at the bartender again.

"I am more than pretty sure," he said, "that I would have forked over all of the money to my wife. But grown children have a way of embarrassing a grown and widowed man. Grown children, still children, can never be widowed, don't you see. And my wife and I used to do this town after a job, every time I got back. A visit not every man who goes home each night might be fully able to understand." He cautioned himself. Silenced. No one else said anything. The old man was looking at the bartender and now everyone else was looking at the old man.

"My first big job was on the Coulee," he said at last, brightly. "And she also went with me when we did the whole Tennessee. After that I pretty much moved around. And after each time away, we, she and I, would have a pretty goddam good time around this town. This time I imagine I did some pretty silly things, alone. But my! they were lovely people, those two! Charming. Charming. That nice young man and his gorgeous wife. At least he said she was his wife. She did not say much. She did not have to say anything." He became silent again.

"Drink your drink," the bartender said.

The old man looked down at the quivering shot glass. Then he raised his head and smiled innocently.

The bartender stared at the glass, too. Then, quickly, he put a thick double-shot glass on the bar. Then he put it back. He picked up a small beer glass instead, a clean thin glass, and lifted the shot glass and sloshed the whiskey over into it without wasting a drop. Then he got out another still larger glass and filled it with ice. Then he threw the ice out and half-filled it with water. He got out two paper coasters and put the glasses down on them in front of the old man with the water to the old man's right. He removed the small shot glass and emptied the ash tray and put it back slightly to the water's right. With a fresh bar towel he gave

the bar a short, fast swipe. Then he stepped back. When he was done, and when the old man and everyone there could see that he was done, the old man casually moved his right hand to the whiskey glass and, still looking at the bartender, raised it to his mouth. He sipped some. Then he lowered the glass a few inches and looked into it. Then he sipped some more, closing his eyes. Then he opened his eyes and put the glass down.

"They reminded me, those two," he said, "of me and my wife, of course."

The bartender nodded.

"Me and my wife when we were young and invincible. He was me. Tough enough. Eager. Eager to be on his own. And that girl of his. That sweetheart of a lovely girl. I tell you that girl did for him what everybody is now so ready to tell me my wife always did for me. She. With her body bursting out. And that gorgeous head. That gorgeous hair. She trusted all to trust in her, and so in him, to care. Living proof. And so, me."

The young man's martini was done and the bartender made him another. While he did, no one spoke. The bartender served the girl and her escort more beer, and no one spoke. The bartender pointed to Brian's empty tonic glass. Brian shook his head. Everyone turned back to the old man.

"We met in that fancy little bar at the Palace," he said. "The curvy one that is so dark, like places in crazy old Chicago. They needed the five hundred to deposit on a house in Sausalito, see. Up from Dago. He builds boats. And this house, the perfect place, would go if they did not get the firm money down that night three nights ago and he could not cash a check because they did not know—hell, they had not even spoken to—anybody but me, the wise old traveler. After I handed her the money she went for his checkbook while he called the real estate man and I waited in that fancy mill until they shut the bloody place down. Me. The man who once outfoxed Madame Chiang Kai-shek."

The bartender nodded again. Again the old man sipped his drink.

"Now I am convinced of course, that there is a mistake somewhere. I am convinced they are out looking for me the way I have been looking for them. Oh, I went out to Sausalito. No one ever heard of them. Not yet, naturally. And I called all around San Diego. Not a thing. And I have been missing all those airplanes. Looking. The thing is that I do not think they shall ever find me. For it is not, as you know, such a small world." He lighted a cigarette. He lifted his glass. "Here's to them. The two of them. To those two charming people." He drank his drink.

"All right, now," the bartender said.

"Certainly," the old man said. "I shall go to Portland and prepare for my next job. I know my stuff. Why, I am one of the few men around who knows what Ethiopia should do about her water-table. And all of you mountain-men: wait until we start tipping those plateau. Yet. And yet. I would if I could rather not go creeping back up to Portland, the old bum, to face my roaring success of an in-law. Particularly on a Sunday. This Sunday. That is why I mention the five. Because for five dollars I can rent a parachute from the Military Air Transport boys and fly for free anywhere. They all know me. I've built more fields for them than all the Sea Bees put together. I was on the original Burma crew. And the Ledo. Vinegar Joe would help me out. Bright-Eyes Wingate always did. But it takes five dollars for the parachute, don't you know. Even with your kind dime to call them, to find out if a flight is going my way, they won't let me near the plane without a chute. And when we touch down I get the five back of course, for taxi fare in proper style to my daughter's home. She is not a bad sort once you get her laughing."

Leaning back against the cash register, the bartender gave out a little laugh. "You are *really* something," he told the old man. "Do you know what?"

"So I must work so hard to raise the five connected dollars," the old man said.

All the bartender could do was lean back and happily shake his head.

"Of course," the old man said, "even *with* the five for the chute, there are other problems involved. I must still get out to the field. I mean there is *that* taxi transportation to pay. And an even larger problem looms if there are no flights out tonight, this night, this particular eve, this birthday. I doubt very much that many MATS are flying out tonight."

The bartender was gently laughing now, nodding, saying, "I know, I know," as if someone were telling him his very favorite funny story, one that he enjoyed hearing even though he had already heard it before.

"Then again," the old man said, saying something for the first time tentatively, exploring, "there is the problem of a slight but sustaining repast."

"Yes, yes!" the bartender cried, laughing all the harder. "Food. You mean food. Right?"

"That's right," the old man said, relieved, self-confident once more. "Food. I have not eaten properly for the last two days. Oh a boiled egg here and there. And once a sardine and onion sandwich. But nothing solid, nothing to store."

"Right," the bartender said. "And your bag?"

"The bag?" the old man said.

"Your suit-case, your clothes," the bartender said. "Are they at your hotel? Or checked? Or what?"

The old man's smile widened again. "They are still at the hotel," he said. "I can pick them up on my way back through."

"Sure you can," the bartender said, laughing again, shaking his head, re-filling the old man's glass of water. "And your last job was *where* did you say? Inside Iran? Idaho? Alaska?"

"Egypt," the old man said, suddenly alert. "Egypt I thought I had said."

The bartender tipped back his head and laughed quite happily. "That you did," he told the old man. "That you did." Then he

leaned forward, still quietly laughing, and poured more whiskey into the old man's glass.

Brian looked at his watch. Then he pulled out another dollar and beckoned the bartender. The bartender stepped over to him, in front of him, hiding most of Brian, all but his head, from the others. Brian handed him the dollar.

With quiet intensity, the way police speak to one another in court, the bartender said, "But you have already *paid* for your drink, Sir."

"I know," Brian said, in the same kind of voice, reaching for his things. "That's for you. For *your* drink."

The bartender looked at the dollar in his hand and then back at Brian. "Sir?" he said.

"*You* have a drink," Brian said, turning. "Have *two* drinks."

The bartender held the dollar as if it were an old stone, weighing it, turning it over. He looked at Brian again, who had turned. "Yes, Sir," he said to Brian. Then he added, "Yes. All right, Sir. All right."

Brian moved around the bar and behind the old man toward the door, moving rapidly, going beyond the old man to the door and out through the door, hearing the old man speak once again to the bartender, hearing him say, "All these additional logistics must be approached, of course, and solved, of course, without, that is, turning me into any kind of a charmer myself."

"Of course," Brian heard the bartender say. "Of course. Of course. Of course."

Letter from Canada

BABES IN MOOSELAND; OR, MAPLE LEAF DRAG

Because it was going to be a vacation, we hoped that it would help us to forget at least some of the big problems. And as we began to make our plans it looked as if it might. For the only big matters which the young lady making our reservations said we should be concerned about were the moose and the Canadians. As she marked with red ink one long stretch of the new road around the north side of Lake Superior, she said that moose are creatures of habit and still use their old trails even when those trails cross the new road. And she said that the Canadians are fine people but do make you think sometimes that when you visit Canada you are really in a foreign country. Later, as we looked at the maps she had made for us, we talked about what she might have meant by "really" and by "foreign." And still later, in Canada, we found ourselves worrying about other definitions as well. Once Eileen even argued we should call this our semantic holiday and I said we should not be anti-semantic.

But first the moose. About them the young lady was in part right. But only in part. As we drove and marked our progress over her map to the moose-crossing section and were beginning to think about slowing down we saw almost immediately a cow moose standing spraddle-legged in a wet green ditch beside the road. She stood looking at us, a sheaf of grass sticking out of her mouth, as if modeling for a cover for *Sports Abroad* or an illustration for *God's Country and the Carbine*. We slowed and finally stopped. The moose did not move. She looked over her shoulder at us and then went back to her feeding. We backed up a little for a better view of our first live moose but we did not get out of the car; we remembered that the young lady had said we should not try to photograph and certainly should not molest the moose, they being truculent and unpredictable

and inclined to anger toward anyone who looked as if he might be planning to interfere with their routines.

The next moose we saw was large and antlered and he was clambering up a steep bank away from the road and heading into the woods. He went about his business without a glance in our direction, but we did get a good look at the heavy-shouldered, fine-rumped, horse-like bulk of him before he was gone.

The third moose we went past without even seeing. But we did see, with astonishment, on this road where we had been passing or meeting a car only about once in twenty minutes, a double line of automobiles parked on both shoulders of the road, their boat-laden trailers sticking out into the line which traffic was supposed to follow when it existed, and *we* stopped too, tourists at heart, as curious as moose. And as we opened our doors a man coming along the line of cars said, "There's a moose in the ditch." And we saw, a couple of hundred yards behind us, a crowd of people carrying cameras and standing pressed against the guard-rail, looking into what from our position was dark forest.

"I thought that moose were dangerous," I said.

"Not this one aint," the man said. "At least he aint done nothing yet. He's eating only. Standing in the mud eating."

So we got out, with camera too, and began walking back to where the crowd was. We passed a long line of what here in Canada we could call "large foreign cars" bearing Illinois and Michigan and Tennessee license plates. I took the first picture when I saw movement in the ditch, afraid I might frighten our quarry, and the second when I was near enough to see the animal against the muskeg and stone which was the same color as he was, and the third after I was as close as the rail would allow and the moose looked as if he filled the whole view-finder. And the moose stood quietly, flicking his not-tail, up to his knees in water-filmed mud in the ditch, as oblivious to the crowd as he would have been in a zoo with glass walls and steel bars holding him safe from peanuts and beer-cans and paper-wrapped taffy.

I was still not able to forget the warnings we had got in Minneapolis. I asked the man next to me, "Is he sick or something? Maybe stupid?"

"Dumb," the man said. He was an American. "There's nothing to it," he said. "I got a friend in Springfield who buys a license and drives up here with a trailer and a gang of guys and comes back in four days. He says he just stays along the road and walks a little into

the woods to fill up." In Minnesota to "fill up" means that each member of a hunting party has as much game to bring home as the license allows. I assumed it meant the same in Illinois. "They're dumb," the man said. And he went on to tell that back down there a piece, at a filling station, he had been told of what this new road meant to the moose. And of how during the spring eleven moose had been killed near here. It was now early June. And all spring, since the warming of the sun and the melting of ice from the road, the moose, unsophisticated, lured by creature comfort, unaware of what this road really was, had moved out of their swamps by night to lie and sleep on the new heat-retaining black-topped pavement, where, their bodies dark against the dark road, they had been struck and killed by trucks and cars. As I listened to this story I watched the moose in the ditch move his feet up and down in the sucking muskeg and feed carefully and slowly as a hundred and fifteen pictures were made of him by tourists bearing sixty-five cameras. Then I walked back to where Eileen stood a little aloof and still thinking that perhaps the map-marker was right and we got into the car and drove on.

The moose problem was perhaps not solved, but it was at least "opened up." And the other problem, the "foreign country" one, we forgot all about until we got to Montreal.

There we found that *The Saturday Evening Post*, just as at home, had not only anticipated but advertised the problem for us on big posters framed on the sides of all the buses. The posters, orange letters on black background, asked impertinent questions about the friendship between Canadians and the Americans. Reading these posters, we assumed that the answer which the *Post* promised would deal with the attitude of Americans toward Canadians, but when we got a copy of the magazine we found that Harold Martin's article, in the issue of June 17, 1961, was actually entitled "Are the Canadians Still our Friends?" The advertising for the article had been slanted differently in each country. At least, this was our first impression. And the article straddled the fence very nicely, arguing that economic penetration of Canada by American finance was annoying certain people but that, as President Kennedy had said in his speech in Ottawa, "Geography has made us neighbors. History has made us friends. Economics has made us partners; and necessity has made us allies. Those whom nature has so joined together, let no man put asunder." We found that the essay gave us no answer either to the Canadian poster question or to the American magazine title

question. Then we decided that the reason for this was that the essay hadn't talked about Canadians at all, but had talked about entities like Canada, generalities like America, and black beasts like international finance.

Some of our semantic arguments began here. One of them had to do with what the posters and the essay were really *about*. Take the word "friend" for instance. Is a friend one from whom we expect to get things, who will do us favors, or is a friend one whom we love and for whom we feel impelled to do things, to whom we want to give things, with whom we want to share, one in short for whom we feel friendship? What, another question went, is the opposite of friend? Is it stranger or enemy? And what is the significance of the sexual overtones in the Kennedy speech?

All this of course we could not blame on *The Saturday Evening Post*, for we had just tried to buy a bottle of whisky with a twenty-dollar traveler's check and been told that no, here in Montreal the liquor distribution system does not cash traveler's checks for people it doesn't know, but that the supermarket across the street might. At the supermarket we had not been able to find the cigarettes or any clerk who could tell us where the cigarettes were kept but finally we did find them and then found ourselves in the old quandary as to what brand to buy. We had made the mistake of crossing the border with only two packages of Pall Malls and now, in Montreal, five days later, our throats were raw and we were trying brand after brand without any therapeutic success. Selecting finally a carton beautifully white with a small eccentrically placed black and red label, we tried to pay for it with the same traveler's check, only to be told that no, here in Montreal supermarkets do not cash traveler's checks for people they do not know. Our throats were still sore and we were out of cigarettes when we began to see the posters on the buses. Later we began to read the Martin essay in a cold motel room smoking Black Cat No. 7 cigarettes bought at the motel desk and drinking luke-warm tap-water.

Although the *Post* essay didn't give us much answer, it had helped raise the question which the cigarette and whisky problem had already pushed close to the conscious edges of our minds. But we did not think we could find the final answer in any statement to the effect that certain Canadian financiers resented the intrusion of American capital and that certain Canadian politicians thought the United States and Canada should remain on a friendly footing. What we wanted to know was, how about those supermarket clerks and how

about those liquor-control-commission clerks? In other words, how about the Canadians? Indeed, who *are* the Canadians? This latter was the question that we would have to answer first.

I think that we were not as solemn about all this as those questions might indicate. We had enjoyed our drive from the Pigeon River to the St. Lawrence, we had photographed the moose, we had eaten ten breakfasts (five apiece) of unseasoned Canadian eggs, we had heard and made the routine tourist complaints to the effect that Canadians spoil good beef when they try to cook it and then serve it cold, and we had talked to Canadians who were as different from each other as the same number of Americans would have been different from each other. We decided that we had indeed been talking a little bit even before we reached Montreal about the friendliness or unfriendliness of Canadians and we decided finally that if by the "we" implied in Harold Martin's title we meant ourselves, we two, we could answer Martin's question by saying that some Canadians are our friends and some are not.

At first we thought a less earth-shaking answer to a vaguer question could hardly be found. But because we had enjoyed ourselves finding it we came later to think maybe it *was* important, at least to "us."

To enter Canada, we crossed the Pigeon River as we had many times before and were greeted politely and gravely by a handsome young man dressed somewhat like an airlines pilot. Standing tall and blonde above our car, he asked where we were born and whether we were carrying firearms or liquor and said he hoped we would enjoy ourselves during our stay in Canada. We drove on up the hill and around the curve and began the long winding slope down along the Pigeon to the Middle Falls, thinking that the road was no smoother than it had been, that the air was still crisp and clear and cold and that the sun was still bright with that dustless northern clarity we had always enjoyed. But when we stopped at the Middle Falls we discovered that someone had indeed been influencing someone, that perhaps the Canadian intellectual whom Harold Martin was to quote later was right, that perhaps it was time now to bemoan the fact that "Canadian tastes are being molded by Madison Avenue." For we found that the old-fashioned outdoor toilets had been re-built complete with flush mechanisms and that the little white tea room had been enlarged and was now a long dark bar at which one could buy not only tea and coffee but beer and cigarettes and maple-wood ash trays stamped "Souvenir." It was just like home. The

park itself was barricaded and we had to leave the car in a small marked parking lot. And where we had once driven through on a rough gravel road we now walked on macadam paths lined with planted geraniums and petunias and littered with large cans into which signs urged us to place our litter.

From the Middle Falls we drove on Kings Highway 61, to us of course patriotically considered an extension of U.S. 61, in a stream of American-licensed automobiles pulling boats toward the Nipigon. We went through Port Arthur and Fort William, a long drag like the long drag through Duluth, and not until we came into the newly constructed and still being constructed part of the Trans-Canada highway did we feel that we had come to a foreign country. And even then the strangeness lay mostly in the fact that the traffic was thinner and the hills rougher than along Minnesota's North Shore.

Although we were moving from west to east, against the stream, moving from the frontier toward the seats of civilization and government, this did give us the advantage of being able to see the country in some kind of historical perspective, the forests having been here before the big cities, the *voyageurs* before the *entrepreneurs*, the moose before the Elks. We moved out of the wilderness into the logging country into the farming country into the big cities. But even in the almost absolute wilderness between Nipigon and Sault Ste. Marie we would come on small-town trading posts and paper-mill settlements like Terrace Bay and Marathon. And sometimes miles out in the forest we would smell the exhaust from the mill stacks and once in the early morning we crossed a series of small streams of chemical waste which steamed not with the dawn haze but with acrid clouds of laboratory stink. Obviously we would not find *absolute* wilderness. After all, the road was here, the moose were dying, and Canada, to borrow an absolute from the *Post*, was on the march.

We slept in the larger cities, and we drank coffee and ate breakfast in the small towns or at filling stations along the road. We began to meet the "foreign" Canadians. And some of them we learned were not foreign at all. In Sault Ste. Marie, next to a new Dominion Store as large as the largest Red Owl and flying a dozen bright Canadian flags in honor of its impending opening, we found the motel run by the fat eager man who pointed with pride to the American Express credit-card medallion on his front door and who boasted that next week, if we were here and had postcards to mail, he would be able to meter our cards for us and thus save us the trouble of buy-

ing stamps. He is our memory of that town. As we were getting ready to go out for dinner, we heard him, loud and genial, greeting his guests, parking their cars, carrying their luggage, telling them that the very best restaurant in town, run by a good friend of his, was only a few blocks away. In him was no hostility. Nor was there any hostility in the lunch counter owner with whom we had a cup of coffee the next morning. For he, without being asked, began immediately upon our sitting down, to explain how deeply he was in debt, how difficult it was to find what he called "mortgage-money," how much it had cost him simply to prepare the site for his lunch counter and his gas station, that he had indeed eleven thousand dollars worth of fill beneath his establishment. He told all this with a kind of wonder in his voice, without bitterness or hostility.

The first hostility we felt was our own when we drove through Sudbury. And it was a purely sentimental hostility, which marked us as people not of our time, as reactionaries, for what we were angry about and depressed by was the way the country looked. We were in fact feeling the way we thought the moose ought to be feeling about the encroachment on their wilderness. The first hint we had that we were coming to a new kind of non-wilderness, or to a man-made wilderness if you please, was when among the rolling wooded hills we came suddenly upon a small lake and saw there a multitude of people in bathing trunks and swimming suits sunning themselves, as crowded and as tangled on every slope of a small knoll as a nest of basking snakes, and as thick as water-bugs in the margins of the lake. At first we thought this was just another example of what we had seen at the Sault where at the urging of our host we had gone to visit the park to see the zoo of Canadian wild-life and found crowds of families picnicking and hosts of people simply walking on the grass and watching other people in what we thought was a spasm of togetherness, an exaggeration of gregariousness made inevitable by the loneliness of the great country which surrounded them. What amazed us both there at the Sault and now here was simply that so many people could be found in one place in a country which for the most part looked, to our sentimental eyes, unpopulated. What amazed us was their number, and the number of automobiles parked on both sides of the road, and we wondered aloud whence they could all have come. The people did not cause our hostility of course; we were willing to share their country with them. Our hostility began when we thought we knew what had driven them out to this little lake.

We argued that they had simply run away from civilization, that they had more sense than the moose, that they were moving away from whatever it was in their lives that was analogous to the road in the lives of the moose. And we were sure they were running away from Copper Cliff and Sudbury, for there, a few miles along the road from the little lake, we found the earth ravaged and the greenery destroyed by the fumes from the smelters and furnaces of the cities. Along the highway here in the dead spaces between one group and another of tall smoke-stacks were piles of black slag and lava-like flowages of yellow waste. The small hills themselves, those few which had not been mined away or bull-dozed away for the new highway, were granite ridges crusted black with the chemical exhalations of the industrial plants and littered with withering, blackened, and dead trees. It was like the world you might dream would exist after the bombs fell, or like the world you might dream would exist after the machines took over, a world in which the very hills were simply mounds of machine excrement. And in all this, when we came to signs of humanity, to signs of the city life of that humanity which we had seen stretched on the mound beside the little lake, the signs were just that—signs for oil stations, used-car lots, junk yards, spaghetti joints, and all the signs flapped in the evil-smelling wind, and from sign to sign, from pole to pole, from building to building, stretched long lines of little bright-colored plastic flags which whirled and spun and rattled in the foul air, as if the people along the little lake had before they left here hung gaudy charms against the further intrusion of the death which surrounded them.

But we soon learned that we really *were* being sentimental. For in one of the little ramshackle frontier towns farther along the road, after we had come into the forest again, we met a young man who told us that Sudbury was a fine town and a beautiful place. He was thinking not Madison Avenue and not United States but frontier and good old England. The good old England was simply a matter of law, but the frontier showed itself in the young man's statement that he worked in the mines at Sudbury and in his obvious feeling that the city and the mines represented a solid conquering of the surrounding wilderness, were in fact progress and enlightenment.

And his town was not as ramshackle as first we thought, either. We looked at it with Western movies in our minds, I think, and we did see false fronts and frame buildings and dance-halls and we did notice that all the buildings were set well back from the road beyond wide empty gravel parking lots, but we should have seen more

ERLING LARSEN

clearly what comes to mind now — that all the buildings were freshly painted and that in front of at least half of them stood flower-boxes and little collections of petunias and geraniums. So what we really had in this town was not something which could be in the *Post* or here labeled Canadian or anything else. It was a strange amalgam of wilderness, industry, small British garden, and the people were dominated by a variety of cultures.

The people were willing to talk, wanted to talk, but they were slow to begin. When we came into the hotel here, the young man took our order and went away. After he had served us he went away again but then, after obviously having gone to the window to look out at our little red English automobile, he came back to ask us about it and to tell of how he had not long ago absolutely wrecked an Austin-Healey. It was a fairly long story and it involved a young lady, a friend he said she was, and a truck and it was all pretty sad. But when we had heard it and expressed understanding he asked if we had come through Sudbury and told us of how much he liked the place, almost as though he might have suspected that we had *not* liked it. He left us alone then, other customers were coming in, but soon an older man joined us and asked the same question which had started the earlier conversation.

"Is that your car?"

"Yes," I said.

"How is it that you don't drive an American car?" he asked.

I was beginning to think of all the answers when Eileen solved the problem by saying simply, "Because we *like* this one."

And he sat down to tell us his life story and his financial situation, much as the lunch-room operator back near the Sault had done earlier that morning.

But this man was different from the lunch-operator. He was tall, heavy in the shoulders, with a craggy heavy face which badly needed a shave. And before he would talk to us he had to establish this common ground of automobile. For he was not a Triumph-driver but a Volvo-driver and he had to tell us that just this morning he had come all the way from the Sault in three hours. It had taken us about seven, what with coffee-breaks, and we professed of course to be much impressed. And it was important to him that he, unlike most Canadians, drove a small foreign car.

For he saw himself as an individual, as a pioneer in a country still full of pioneers. He told us that not far from his hotel were thousands and thousands of acres of timber lands which could be settled

by any properly qualified citizen as homestead land and that the bush, as he called it, the country back from the road, was very sparsely settled right now by men who had gone out into the woods with their families, built barns and houses of the legally required size, and were busily engaged in harvesting the timber for sale. He described how on Saturday nights these men would come out of the bush and descend upon his hotel.

Here was where our Western movie feeling evaporated. It had begun to go earlier when we had been about to enter the hotel and discovered that we had to use a certain door. In the first place, this was not called a saloon but a hotel. And in the second, it was very neatly divided into two parts. Its white clapboard cube was regularly and precisely cut with windows and its entrances were two, one labeled Men and the other labeled Ladies and Escorts, and we of course therefore had to go up the side, not the front, steps and enter the proper door. But now, inside, talking to the owner, we learned that even more regulations than entrance labels covered night life in this outwardly rough frontier town. For in Ontario you can find no such thing as a crowded saloon; the law establishes exactly how many people may be contained in any one public room at any one time. With the result, our new friend told us, that on these Saturday nights he would have long lines of men and women waiting outside his hotel, waiting to get in and drink. And that the people inside would, after having had one or two drinks, leave and make room for their friends. The satisfied ones would walk across the road to the dance hall, dance a while, and return to the end of the line again and stand waiting for a new opening in either the Men or the Ladies and Escorts. The traffic crossing the road, he told us, was on Saturday nights much much heavier than it ever was, day or night, up and down the road.

This picture of patient queuers before a saloon destroyed the last of our Western-movie illusions. The Canadian frontier is apparently a very orderly frontier. And even what we had come to couple in our minds with the ruggedest of individualism, the cutting of timber for profit, was done with order and care. Anyone wanting to harvest the timber lands has open to him two alternatives, the one of homesteading, the other of purchasing timber rights. And in either case he pays an established footage tax to the government, hauls his logs to the mills, collects his money, and almost as a matter of routine eventually retires. Our man had bought large timber rights and in five years time, he told us with unconcern and

calm, had saved the twenty thousand dollars he had needed to buy his hotel and set himself up in this new, orderly business.

The only disorder he spoke about was governmental disorder. He lamented the fact that no liquor in Ontario has to have on its label any description of its proof, alcoholic content, age, or other qualification for potability. He went further. He said that the provincial government bought the whisky, watered it, and *then* bottled it, selling it with the stamp pasted across the cork, which stamp simply stated that the whisky had been bottled under government supervision. It would require, he said, a very special kind of naivete to suppose that government supervision necessarily means honest supervision.

The common people, he said, are the orderly ones, the timber-packs, the settlers, the walkers between dance halls and hotels. And we saw, ourselves, the kind of orderliness about which he was speaking perhaps in the suburbs of cities like Ottawa. There, when we got lost because the maps we were using did not show the big new four-lane highways which enter and leave the city, we found ourselves driving through street after street filled with almost identical cube-like brick houses, each of the houses having between it and the street a sloping rock-garden, now at this time of year red with new blossoms, identical to the sloping rock garden before the neighboring house. Harold Martin's lamenting intellectual could hardly blame Madison Avenue for this. We blamed, of course, an older tradition requiring that every man's home be his own rock garden.

Or his own conference-type motel. For in Ottawa are motels like ours, complete with cocktail lounges, breakfast rooms, coffee shops, dining rooms, and public stenographers. A rock-garden fertilizer salesman can in Ottawa attend a sales conference without having to ever go out in the rain. Conformity and legality are as evident in Ottawa as they are in the bush country.

Sometimes we wondered whether this conformity were selective at all, for in many of the places we had stopped we were sure that more than one tradition was being observed in a sort of unknown-god worship to ensure that *everything* right would be done. One restaurant, for instance, out in the country, beside a lake, complete with dance-hall, hotel rooms, gasoline pumps and canopy, was like this. The canopy was unfinished but the chrome was being tacked to it anyway. And the dining room was like two rooms in one; the wall to our right was finished in knotty pine and the one to our

left was painted dark maroon and hung with large mirrors like windows surrounded with white shutters and hung with flowered drapes. In the mirrors were reflected the opposite knots and also the glass-beaded ball-room chandeliers. We were being treated to at least three kinds of propriety here. And the fourth kind was the one we were becoming the most used to—the one which allows anyone to converse loudly about any subject in any surroundings. The hostess was interrogating a young man who was eating his breakfast as to whether or not he was married now or again and as to the reasons for the trouble with Mary and as to why exactly he had been arrested last week. None of these matters were private, obviously, and all of them were of interest and concern to all the young man's friends as well as to all casual listeners, for here in Ontario we are all parts of one wilderness.

It was only in Montreal that we found the kind of daring rugged individualism and the kind of disregard for law which we usually associate with the frontier. We came into town with the top of the car up and with the curtains tightly buttoned and with the heater running. It was to us a cold day. But we were suddenly surrounded by swarms of Triumphs and MG's and Sprites, all with their tops down or off, being driven madly by hatless and windblown young men and young ladies in their shirt sleeves. And neither these rugged sports-car drivers nor the drivers of the large American cars observed traffic laws or speed laws. Thirty-mile speed limits meant that one drove as fast as one could. Corners and curves were obviously built for the purpose of wearing out screaming tires. The only traffic signs which were obeyed were those saying "No Left Turn," and these were observed for the simple reason that no one in his right mind would ever try to make a left turn, legal or not, against the traffic rushing toward him. No one waited for anyone, and we discovered that one way to be sure we were in Montreal was to stop at a stop sign and wait the usual two seconds for that big truck to pull up behind us and blip his engine and blow his horn until we dared go through the sign. The accepted way in Montreal to break into traffic is simply to break in. You stick the nose of your car out into the traffic and expect others to stop. In three days, at some hazard to our nervous systems, we acquired these manners. We conformed to non-conformity and then we began to read the signs on the buses and became frightened again. We wondered whether someone were out to get us.

One could, I suppose, like Harold Martin, behave learnedly and

make heavy generalizations about all this. One might argue that Montreal, the commercial center of Canada, the city from which went forth centuries ago the first explorers and the first fur-traders, is the root and source for rugged individualism. And that the tough frontier, where survival is difficult, is the place in which one abides by certain definite rules in order to survive. And one might argue too that the French-Catholic province of Quebec, with its however waning tradition of secession, proud of its individuality and of the great differences between it and the rest of Canada, would be the likely place in which to find the prodding, go-devil, derring-do which is typified by Montreal traffic.

Thus we occupied ourselves in the cold motel room. And we did not, of course, find the answers to the questions which the buses and the *Post* had posed. Perhaps the people who would not cash our traveler's checks were not French Royalists who saw us as political enemies but simply people who saw us as travel-stained and heard us as speaking with strange accents and therefore were rightly suspicious. And perhaps the horn-blowing truck drivers were perfectly right; perhaps we were cowardly and stopping before the moving wheels of progress. And, on the other hand, to generalize, if the Canadians do hate Americans it is probably because they see themselves in us or us in themselves. For like us they are lovers of tradition and haters of law. Like us they are formalists to whom pattern is desirable simply as pattern. In the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, for instance, we saw a show of paintings owned by and loaned for this show by physicians. And there, whenever we saw a painting which looked like a Renoir we hadn't seen before or an Edward Hopper that had not been reproduced, we found that it was by a Canadian painter. And here, when in this cold motel room our thin Minnesota blood had chilled to the point that we went to the office to ask what could be done, the answer was simply that on the first of June the heating system was converted to an air conditioning system and that it would therefore be impossible now to put any heat into the room. But the young lady at the desk said we should not worry, that the air-conditioner would not come on until the air temperature outdoors reached seventy degrees and that such heat was not forecast. Further, she said, if you get cold at night please ask for another blanket. Like a good American, this handsome, black-haired young French-Canadian woman was caught up in a system which was obviously beyond her control but a system within

the limits of which she was quite willing to exercise all her human kindnesses.

Some hope as far as that system is concerned, however, does exist. When we were in Montreal, the *Montreal Star* broke a large story about a new proposal designed to control the extent and the manner of the competition which publishers like Henry Luce give to Canadian publications. The proposal is a complicated one but two parts of it are worth recording here. The first one, which is clearly aimed at the Luce publications and at *The Reader's Digest*, argues that the so-called Canadian editions of *Time* which, because they contain a four page supplement devoted entirely to Canadian news, contain also page after page of Canadian advertising, exist not for the purpose of disseminating news but for the purpose of making money at the expense of Canadian publishers. The proposal concludes by saying that "a nation's communications media must be aware of their responsibilities and that such media should not be used merely for republication of editorial matter to support an advertising structure." What will happen because of all this, of course no one knows, but one evening we listened to a Montreal radio station and heard an ex-*Time*-stringer argue that during political crises in Montreal the only place in which Canadians could read the truth about Canada was in the four pages of the Canadian edition of *Time*. He argued that *Time* was unbiased and fair, uninfluenced by graft or political pressure, and that the Montreal press was in no sense free. And a *Time* official was later quoted in the *New York Times* as arguing that the proposal, if put into effect, would "virtually without notice and certainly without compensation" deprive Time, Inc., "of a property interest valued at more than \$10,000,000" or nearly a dollar for every man, woman and child in Canada.

So what do these men, women and children think of all this? Again, our question, what is a Canadian? An analysis of these magazine arguments might give some kind of answer. But such an analysis would run up against the same old problems of definition and of the meanings of traditions. Obviously freedom is desirable but it is desirable only within certain restricted boundaries. A press should be free but it should be a Canadian press and it should be free to do only certain things. Competition is desirable but it is also desirable that the big competitors, the powers, be handicapped properly and according to the rules. And we thought that when we began to make this sort of abstraction on the basis of what we had seen that we might as well be talking about the United States.

For example, that second part of the report on magazines in Canada. The writers of the report were very careful to make clear that they did not in any way want to interfere with an important part of the Canadian postal and publishing system, with that tradition, if you will, under which the Canadian government gives "free mailing distribution throughout Canada for non-profit cultural magazines containing less than one-third advertising, on the first five thousand copies of each issue and on authorized sample copies." This, whether or not Canadians hate Americans or vice versa should have considerable bearing on the way our own fiscally embattled Postmaster General feels about the Canadian postal system. And it serves also for generalization. We too once thought government should endow or subsidize in this postal manner publications engaged in the education of a free electorate, but we have already passed beyond that stage and are now worried about a deficit in the postal budget and about the subsidy's continued existence working to the benefit only of *Life* and *Time* and their advertisers, and because we have thus passed into a new era we may argue that the only thing wrong with Canada is that she is young, economically and spiritually young.

Our own problems, those of the traveler's checks and the cigarettes, were easily solved the next morning. And we began to enjoy our stay in Montreal, which we soon learned was not a city but a collection of cities, each of which had its own City Hall, and each of which, if we remembered the lesson of the moose, must have been some worried about City's Rights. But this too will pass. For although we found no moose in Montreal we did find evidence of a heartening survival of wilderness. On the highest peak in the city, in Mount Royal Park, from which we could look back into Ontario and across the river and the hills to New England, and to which the wind brought the sounds of trucks and blowing automobile horns, we frequently heard the raucous crowing of the cock pheasants who lived and multiplied here among the little white signs which said that it was forbidden to disturb the herbage or molest the fowl.

ERLING LARSEN

A PLAYGOER IN PARIS

Even a brief report on the theatre in Paris ought, I suppose, to deal both with individual plays and with generalities, so I shall start with some remarks about plays I found interesting and end with some impressions of the general state of the theatre in what I take to be the best theatre-town in the world. First the plays.

It sometimes seems that if Catholicism did not exist it would have to be invented for contemporary French playwrights. Of the serious plays now being presented in Paris, no fewer than four turn on problems made acute by Catholic attitudes. These are Claudel's *The Tidings Brought to Mary*, Anouilh's *Becket*, and Montherlant's *Port-Royal* and *Le Cardinal d'Espagne*. Religious beliefs, like political beliefs tend to produce extreme cases and to justify utter intransigence; hence they are useful to the dramatist even if he does not himself share them. Anouilh and Montherlant are not Catholics, but both have written other plays besides those now current in which religious conceptions are important.

As far as I know, none of Henry de Montherlant's plays have been produced in New York, and certainly they are about as far from being Broadway fare as they could be. Even Off-Broadway might find them disconcerting, for while extravagances like those in *The Balcony* or *The Rhinoceros* are strange but attractive, the severity of Montherlant is forbidding. Consider *Port-Royal*. The play is concerned with the efforts of the nuns in the Jansenist convent at Port-Royal des Champs to withstand the pressures being brought upon them by the crown and by the ecclesiastical authorities. In 1653 Innocent X condemned as heretical five propositions in a theological work called the *Augustinus* by Jansenius, Bishop of Ypres. His followers, among them the nuns of Port-Royal, were re-

quired by Louis XIV and by Hardouin de Péréfixe, archbishop of Paris, to sign a statement of submission to the papal condemnation. In the play, the royal government is concerned to prevent the appearance of any fissures in the uniform façade of the state; the archbishop sees obedience to authority as the first duty of any Christian. The nuns, on the other hand, demand the freedom to debate, to argue, and to submit, if at all, only at the bidding of their inner convictions.

The play opens as the visit of the archbishop to the nunnery is imminent. In their distress the nuns are being guided by Soeur Angélique, and it is she who presents their case in the confrontation with the archbishop which forms the core of the play. The situation is not so simple as the above résumé suggests; Soeur Angélique has the gravest doubts about her faith, but not about her freedom to examine it. The Archbishop de Péréfixe, for his part, is a basically good man, not excessively intelligent, who cannot understand how or why a Christian would question a papal decision. In a note printed in the program at the Comédie française Montherlant points out that here is a situation in which both sides are right. Since in the end the nuns are dispersed and their convent turned over to another order, one must conclude that force has provided the solution to a problem insoluble by reason.

The play lasts a little more than two hours and is in one act without an intermission. On the night I was present, which was that of the two hundred and sixtieth presentation of the play, the audience was utterly silent, evidently following with the closest attention the development of the arguments on the one side and then on the other. There are psychological complexities in the play—jealousy of Soeur Angélique has led another nun to act as spy for de Péréfixe—but its basic interest is dialectical.

Montherlant's latest play is *Le Cardinal d'Espagne* first presented (at the Comédie française) in December, 1960. It is a study of Cardinal Cisneros, Regent of Spain during the minority of the future Emperor Charles V. In Act I the cardinal is shown to be ruthless in his use of power and proud of his achievement as Regent, though he walks barefoot in his palace in the robe of a Franciscan friar. Act II brings a confrontation between the cardinal and the Queen, Joanna the Insane. Her insanity, however, is primarily the utter nihilism of the Book of Ecclesiastes. Joanna has chosen for her crest the royal shield surmounted by a crown, and under it, as motto, the word VANITAS. Before her unblinking stare the cardinal's

inner contradictions become apparent to himself. His protestations of love for the cloister and hatred of power and glory are shown up as hollow. True, he wears a hair shirt even under his cardinal's purple, and sleeps not in his state bed but on a stone slab. But these gestures are shown to be futile by the total sincerity of the Queen, and in Act III Cisneros is reduced to defending himself. A letter, however, arrives from the young king dismissing the cardinal from office and banishing him to the cloister; and, wounded in his vanity and ambition, the old man dies.

Montherlant began his career as a novelist but has devoted himself mostly to the stage for twenty years. He has written thirteen plays to date, six in modern dress and the remainder costume dramas like *Le Cardinal d'Espagne*. Primarily he is a tragic writer, for in almost all his plays the principal character succumbs to his inner contradictions. Despite his interest in costume plays, Montherlant demands of the stage the *verismo* one is more accustomed to in the films. There is something Cartesian about the logic with which his situations develop and in the way even contradictions are built into his people. Unlike Cocteau or Ionesco he has no use in his plays for whimsy nor for more or less surrealist surprises. He has no need for melodramatic events, and his psychology never becomes psychiatry. The spectator may feel that the plays are emotionally neutral, but they are always extremely interesting. Montherlant's characters are apt to seem strange to an American theatre-goer for they are sober and stay in their own beds. They face real and important problems, and when they go down in defeat we feel that no one could have done more than they did.

Claudé's *The Tidings Brought to Mary* is having a revival at the Théâtre de l'Oeuvre which was founded by Lugné-Poe and Maeterlinck in 1892 and where the play was produced in 1902. The current production has Danièle Delorme as Violaine, and while she is certainly very pretty, one is not convinced that God has set her apart for His own ends. Michel Etcheverry is excellent as Anne Vercors and Loleh Bellon has a field day as Mara, the evil sister. The production makes use of the shorter final act which Claudé wrote for the stage, and which seems to me inferior to the longer and more rhapsodic conclusion of the reader's version.

The play is, of course, laid in the middle ages (the time of Joan of Arc) at a farm called Combernon. The farm itself belongs to God in that its feudal duty is to provide food for the nuns of Mon-sanviège who are walled up in their hilltop cloister. The towers of

Monsanvierge and the singing voices of the nuns must dominate Com-bernon, for they give the farm its reason for existence.

Violaine, as the sacrificial lamb, has taken upon herself the guilt of Pierre de Craon which is symbolized by leprosy. In her leper's retreat in the forest she restores to life Mara's baby by that Jacques Hury who had once, before the heavy hand of God fell upon her, been Violaine's fiancé. Mara, driven by jealousy, repays her sister for this miracle by pushing her into a sand-pit and killing her. The argument of the play appears to be that even Mara's wickedness must be subsumed under God's necessities. "Thus," say the program notes, "the whole Creation is united to God in a profound mystery."

I found the play less effective on the stage than in the reading. The miracle scene in Act II did not come off, perhaps because it was greatly cut and because the production conscientiously underplayed it. Certain other scenes, like the one in which Anne Vercors symbolically breaks the bread for his family one last time before setting out on his pilgrimage, which I had always thought very effective, seemed feeble and obvious. The bread was a real and rather crooked French loaf and, after its distribution, the various characters stood about with it in their hands until the end of the act.

There is something Wagnerian about Claudel: his conceptions are vast and yet precise and detailed so that a presentation of them on the stage must err either through a reduction in their scale or through a feeble literalness. Siegfried's dragon is not harder to manage than the nunnery of Monsanvierge, and the production at L'Oeuvre tried to convey the existence of the holy recluses by appropriate and periodic musical snatches composed by Maria Scibor. Unless one knew the play I doubt if the idea would have been clear, especially since the shorter last act makes no use of Monsanvierge and it tends to be forgotten.

In the case of *Becket* we have the Church as a pretext for the transformation of a worldly voluptuary (albeit with a heart of gold; see the scene with the Saxon peasant) into a martyr. Anouilh does not deal with the Church reverently as Claudel does, or straightforwardly as Montherlant does; the Church and churchmen (including the Pope) are made the butt of a good deal of mockery, so that Becket's transformation, when it comes, is all the more surprising on the part of an insider, of one who *knows*. Nevertheless Becket is a believer as the king is not; and duty to God separates these two as decisively as it separated Violaine and Jacques Hury in the *Tidings*. Anouilh has referred to "le Becket ambigu dont j'avais

besoin," but Becket's actions and his explanations of them are only too explicit. Even so, the wrench is very great. It is hard for me to believe that faith depends on an official position, and that Becket the layman could have been what he was and then be transformed into the defender of God by his improbable investiture as Archbishop. It is true that at one point after his conversion he seems to deny God but to accept as his duty leadership in the struggle of the Church against the encroachments of the Crown on her autonomy. If this is so, he is in the position of defending the honor of an institution whose *raison d'être* he doubts. Maybe it is in this sense that Becket is ambiguous.

I am afraid I was most impressed by what seemed to me the excessive facility of the playwright. *Becket* repeats many of the good tricks from earlier Anouilh successes: the two queens are treated as two others were in *The Lark*; the brutal, simple-minded soldiers are like those in *Antigone* and so forth. The play includes most of the dreary music-hall jokes about fog in England and Englishmen in France, and even one about the price of a French cook being almost the same as that of a good horse. In short, Anouilh has tried here for the easy laugh and he gets it. In him it seems to me, we have the Scribe or perhaps the Sardou of the twentieth century. The best thing about the play was the extremely ingenious and attractive settings devised by Jean Denis Malclès, although Jacques Dannoville and Bruno Cremer, as the king and Becket, did as well as could be expected with the material they had.

Among the state-supported theatres in Paris, the old Odéon (now called the Théâtre de France) is having a new lease on life under the management of Jean-Louis Barrault and Madeleine Renaud. During the months of May and June they turned the theatre over to a company called *Le Théâtre Nouveau*, directed by Jean-Marie Serreau. Despite its name, this group is confining itself to reviving some of the avant-garde successes of the fifties in two programs which are being given alternately: on one is Samuel Becket's *Waiting for Godot* and on the other is a double bill of Genet's *The Maids* and Ionesco's *Amédée, ou comment s'en débarrasser*. I have not seen this *Godot*, but I was much interested in the Genet and Ionesco. In *The Maids* two sisters lament their inability to achieve an authentic existence. Forced into the role of servants by Madame, they avenge themselves on her by playing at being the mistress when she is out. But in neither case do their lives have any reality, and finally one accepts a poisoned cup of herb tea from the other in the knowledge

that this action, at least, is not pretense; it is "for keeps." The play involves only three people, the two maids and Madame, and struck me as excessively talky. It takes about an hour and a half for the maids to come to a decision while the poisoned tea (prepared for Madame) waits handily on the mantel-shelf and everybody in the audience has seen the conclusion coming for half an hour.

Amédée, too, over-exploits a gag. A man and wife live a sequestered existence with the body of a man Amédée has murdered long ago. Suddenly and unexpectedly, the corpse begins to grow (making as it does so a loud, ratchety noise) until its enormous feet push into the room where Amédée and his wife have sought refuge. Finally they decide Amédée shall drop the crescent cadaver into the Seine, and the play ends in one of those mock apotheoses Ionesco is fond of, with Amédée being carried off into the sky by red, white and blue balloons. The desperation of the couple as their secret seems about to burst into the open is both interesting and amusing, but twenty minutes or so instead of more than an hour would have made the point better.

Now for those generalities. One of these is that the theatre in Paris is in a less flourishing state than I had expected. When one glances at the plays listed in the newspaper one has the impression of great activity, but if one subtracts the state-supported theatres (the Opéra, the Opéra Comique, the Comédie française, the Théâtre de France, the TNP) and the city-supported theatre (the Châtelet) many of the best productions are eliminated. The boulevard theatres, which perform plays by such writers as André Roussin and Roger-Ferdinand, are as shoddily commercial as anything Broadway has to offer, and at the moment avant-garde theatre activity seems to be limited to productions of Ionesco plays already three years old or more. In the spring there is, to be sure, the Théâtre des Nations, which brings to Paris theatre from all over Europe and from both Americas. Still much of what is presented is what might be called minimal theatre (the British contribution this year, for instance, included some solo readings called *Shakespeare's Heroines* by Barbara Jefford of the Old Vic) or only marginal theatre (the Peruvian, Mexican, Cuban etc. national ballets).

In a particular week seventeen Parisian theatres were presenting programs of other than time-killers. Of these productions seven were translations (from English, German and Russian) and of the remaining ten not one was new in the 1960-61 season. Without Ionesco and Genet the new theatre would be in a bad way indeed,

and even so Genet's latest play cannot be produced here because it deals with the Algerian War.

On the other hand, the Paris theatre has so far escaped the "smash-hit" compulsions of New York. For one thing production costs must be lower here since plays can survive for a long time with houses which would mean their disappearance in New York. When I saw *Becket*, for instance, the theatre was a third, perhaps half, empty, but the play was in its second year and shows no sign of being taken off. Then again, there is always the possibility that a state theatre will take up a *succès d'estime* which could hardly survive commercially. Often, as in the case of the production of *Amédée* at the Théâtre de France, the revival gives a more spacious and expert production than the original avant-garde group could manage.

Without having any expert knowledge or any inside information whatever, I should guess that Parisian theatres are facing much the same difficulties that theatres face in New York and elsewhere, and at least one that is new to Paris. This is the institution of the weekend. Now that nearly everybody has a Citroën or at least a Vespa, there is a marked tendency for Paris to empty from Saturday noon to Sunday night. Since provincials do not come to Paris in numbers comparable to those in which the butter and egg men flock to New York, and since tourists are largely debarred from plays by language difficulties, the theatres are now more sparsely attended on Saturday and Sunday than during the week. This is an obvious economic hardship and one for which it is difficult to see a remedy. So the theatre here may not be the invalid it is in New York but it is looking a little pale and showing some signs of an anemia which may be pernicious.

DONALD SCHIER

REVIEWS

Did History Stop in 1936?

THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR

By HUGH THOMAS

Harper, 1961

"'History stopped in 1936,'" George Orwell recalled once saying to Arthur Koestler, "at which he nodded in immediate understanding. We were both thinking of totalitarianism in general, but more particularly of the Spanish Civil War." There, as Orwell wrote in "Looking Back on the Spanish Civil War,"

"I saw, in fact, history being written not in terms of what happened but of what ought to have happened according to various 'party lines.' . . . This kind of thing is frightening to me, because it often gives me the feeling that the very concept of objective truth is fading out of the world. . . . I know it is the fashion to say most of recorded history is lies anyway. I am willing to believe that history is for the most part inaccurate and biased, but what is peculiar to our age is the abandonment of the idea that history *could* be truthfully written."

This fear became part of Orwell's vision of a coming age of totalitarianism, and his despair of history as an accurate record, superbly documented in *Homage to Catalonia*, led him to conceive his last two major works in forms best understood, perhaps, as substitutes for written history. The animal allegory of *Animal Farm* and the anti-Utopian prophecy of *1984* point the same moral as the never-to-be-hoped-for truthful history of the Spanish Civil War, the

betrayal of the workers by their leaders and professed friends. Allegory and prophecy replaced history because history could no longer be believed to be true—it was merely retroactive fiction. "History has stopped," Winston Smith says in explaining the function of the Ministry of Truth in 1984. "Nothing exists except an endless present."

Seen against the background of Orwell's prophecies, the opening words of Hugh Thomas's *The Spanish Civil War* are an affirmation of faith:

The time has come when a study can usefully be made of the Spanish Civil War. In addition to the vast amount of reporting and pamphleteering produced at the time, much valuable material has been published which should cause a revision of many of the preconceptions once held about the war. . . . A new and more objective picture can be formed, in place of that prevalent at the time.

What would Orwell, if he were alive, think of this claim? Does this new history of the war in Spain written by a man who was only eight years old when it ended merely fulfill Orwell's prediction that "after all, *some* kind of history will be written, and after those who actually remember the war are dead, it will be universally accepted. So for all practical purposes the lie will have become truth"? Or does Mr. Thomas's book suggest rather that Orwell's view of the truth about the war, like his loss of faith in the possibility of truthful history, was only the result of a purely personal despair?

"The broad truth about the war is simple enough," Orwell wrote in 1943. "The Spanish bourgeoisie saw their chance of crushing the labour movement, and took it, aided by the Nazis and by the forces of reaction all over the world." "In essence it was a class war . . . the Fascists won because they were the stronger; they had modern arms and the others hadn't."

Mr. Thomas's book makes it clear that "the broad truth" is much more complicated. In effect, his history substantiates Tom Hopkinson's criticism of Orwell as being "without historical perspective. He saw the world of his day with peculiar intensity because he saw extremely little of its past, and he regarded the future as simply a continuation and extension of the present which he knew." Such "tunnel vision" has an inevitable consequence: truthful written history is thought to be nothing more than a mirror of particular events

that actually had happened, a mirror that to be true must ever reflect the same image. Grant this, and all the rest of Orwell's thoughts on history are inescapable. If the documents of the past are destroyed (as is done with the "memory holes" in 1984) and if one only waits until those who actually remember the past have died (as in *Animal Farm*), then history has indeed stopped. This fantasy has a terrifying logic, but it still tells us nothing of the kind of history Mr. Thomas can actually write.

It is peculiar that Orwell, who said that he had devoted all his writing after his experiences in Spain to the attempt "to make political writing into an art," apparently had no idea that history, too, can be made an art. Yet this is precisely what Thomas has done; his *Spanish Civil War* is as much a work of art as *Animal Farm* or 1984. Whereas Orwell thought the writing of history was a process by which "the lie will have become truth" and therefore turned, in despair, to the art of political fiction, Thomas has turned to art to sustain rather than deny history. After consulting an enormous number of documents and interviewing many of the participants in and observers of the war, Mr. Thomas decided that the "truth" of the conflict was found not in the details of his research but rather in the mirror of tragic art. His "new and more objective picture" is the tragedy of 1936-1939 revealed in its historical perspective.

"In a broad sense," Mr. Thomas writes, almost as if replying to Orwell, "the Spanish Civil War was primarily the result of general European ideas and movements upon Spain. After all, from the sixteenth century onwards, each of the leading political ideas of Europe has been received with enthusiasm by one group of Spaniards and opposed ferociously by another, without any desire to compromise being shown by either side." Spain has thus been a laboratory where the most profoundly held beliefs of modern Western civilization are first isolated in a pure state and then subjected to pressures that would test their breaking point. This has been the "peculiarly Spanish" role in "that general European civil war which has lasted since the Renaissance": "the advocates of each idea have desired to impose their own views exclusively, and to expel all others as brutally and as finally as the Moors and the Jews were expelled in the sixteenth century" (pp. 210-211).¹

¹ Thomas characteristically closes his argument about the ultimate causes of the war with a revealing anecdote (his footnotes and asides are as entertaining as Gibbon's): "Each group has wished to emulate the nineteenth-century Spanish General Narváez, who, when asked on his deathbed if he forgave his enemies, replied: 'My enemies? I have none. I have had them all shot.'"

Thus, at its outset, Thomas argues, the war in Spain gripped the emotions of Europe and America because it seemed to be a conflict of ideas, of noble causes. But by the conclusion of the war all these ideals had been either betrayed or cynically exploited by the leaders on both sides in desperate attempts to achieve military victory. Thomas's chapters on the political maneuvering on each side interspersed among the accounts of the bloody but indecisive battles are masterful analyses of the ever increasing pressure as the war dragged on of "necessity, the tyrant's plea" upon the Nationalists and Republicans alike. Put to the test of war, the ideas of the Catholic hierarchy, the Monarchists, the Falange, the Liberals, the Socialists, the Anarchists, the Trotskyites, the Basque and Catalan Separatists, and the Communists were all "transmuted in the strife from passionate conflicts between irreconcilable extremes into opportunistic battles for victory, or survival, at all costs" (p. 609).

And the common people died by the tens of thousands "nearly all giving their lives—with less reluctance than in most wars—for causes which, on both sides, they had come to believe were noble" (p. 608). Ordinary men sacrificed themselves for their ideas while these ideas were being betrayed by all their leaders save one—General Franco. Franco survived the tragic conflict triumphant because he alone remained aloof from all its ideals and causes. Franco won, in Thomas's analysis, not only because he was aided by Hitler and Mussolini, but also because "he established himself as the political leader of the most passionately concerned country in the world by a contempt for political feelings. . . . He was politically successful because he treated politics as a department of military science" (p. 610). The Republic lost, not only because the democracies would not come to her aid, but also because all the various non-Communist parties of the Republic tried to avoid sacrificing their conflicting ideals—until it was too late. (This is probably why the war still seems to many to have been simply a conflict between Fascism and Communism: only the Communist leaders were, from the start, willing to sacrifice all their professed ideals to achieve victory: the party which was willing to betray its ideals was ultimately the strongest force in fighting the general without any ideals at all.)

Here then is Thomas's picture of the Spanish Civil War: "Upon the heaped skulls of all these ideals, one dispassionate, duller, greyer man survived triumphant, as Octavius survived the civil wars in Rome. Caesar and Pompey, Brutus and Antony, Cato and Cicero—

all, with all their genius, lacked the minor talent of being able to survive. Francisco Franco was the Octavius of Spain" (p. 609).

This would seem irony enough for one war, but the tragedy of the Spanish Civil War had still another dimension of irony that cannot be appreciated unless we turn from Roman history to Greek epic. Reading Thomas's narrative with its abrupt, skillful juxtapositions of the fighting and suffering in Spain with the cynical, self-seeking diplomacy of the statesmen of Europe, one is reminded again and again of the *Iliad* where the gods, by offering or withholding their help to the mortals struggling below, control the destinies of the war. The fate of Spain was decided in the Olympian halls of the Chancelleries of Europe, not on the Sierras or plains of Spain; Munich, not any battle fought on Spanish soil, was the turning point of the war.

The final irony of the conflict is brilliantly suggested by Mr. Thomas's choice of a monument to the over 600,000 men and women whose lives were given, or taken, in the war. It is not General Franco's grandiose "The Valley of the Fallen" in the Guadarrama mountains. Mr. Thomas passes over this still-empty tomb of the *Caudillo* in eloquent silence. For the dead who died heroically, if in vain, for passionate political causes, Mr. Thomas can find fitting commemoration only in the realms of art. "The few real masterpieces that were produced will survive as monuments to those who died" (p. 617).

Why did the Spanish Civil War occasion what Mr. Thomas calls "a burst of creative energy . . . comparable in quality to anything produced in the Second World War"? Mr. Thomas, as we have seen, suggests the reasons it engaged the conscience of the West so intensely, but why was the conflict ultimately so rich in masterpieces of art? We recall Pablo Picasso's *Guernica*, C. Day-Lewis's "The Nabara," W. H. Auden's "Spain 1937" and Ernest Hemingway's *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, and Mr. Thomas throughout his book acknowledges his indebtedness to these and other works of artists inspired by the war. Once the pamphleteering and propaganda was done, they saw the Spanish Civil War as inherently tragic as the legends of Greece, but now the tragedy was born of ideologies not legends, contemporary history not ancient myth. Mr. Thomas's theme of the developing tragedy of suffering individuals caught in the impersonal fate of modern war seems to have been suggested by a passage in Stephen Spender's autobiography, *World Within World* (London: 1951, pp. 187-188). His evocation of the proud heroism

of the Spaniards is summed up in the opening and closing lines of C. Day-Lewis's narrative of the last fight of the crew of the Republican armed trawler *Nabara* against overwhelming odds:

Freedom is more than a word, more than the base coinage
Of statesmen, the tyrant's dishonoured cheque, or the
dreamer's mad
Inflated currency. She is mortal, we know, and made
In the image of simple men who have no taste for carnage
But sooner kill and are killed than see that image betrayed.

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For these I have told of, freedom was flesh and blood — a mortal
Body, the gun-breech hot to its touch: yet the battle's height
Raised it to love's meridian and held it awhile immortal;
And its light through time still flashes like a star's that has
turned to ashes,
Long after *Nabara's* passion was quenched in the sea's heart.²

And his epitaph for the fallen will call to mind the final stanza of Auden's "Spain 1937":

The stars are dead; the animals will not look:
We are left alone with our day, and the time is short and
History to the defeated
May say Alas but cannot help or pardon.

All these aspects of the tragedy of Spain are combined in the greatest of the masterpieces in English produced by the war, Ernest Hemingway's *For Whom the Bell Tolls*. For the English-speaking world the war in Spain will always be best epitomized in the tragic vision of General Golz in *For Whom the Bell Tolls* who, as he saw the planes flying forward to the doomed attack, watched "with his hard proud eyes that knew how things could be and how they would be instead and said, proud of how they could be, believing in how they could be, even if they never were, 'Bon. Nous ferons notre petit possible.'" It will be a war epitomized in the tragedy of Robert Jordan who had learned that "the things he had come to know in this war were not so simple" and yet died in the integrity of belief in a magnificently simple idea.

Ernest Hemingway's *For Whom the Bell Tolls* is, in essence, the

² *Short is the Time* (New York, 1945), pp. 31, 40.

tragedy of the war as described by Mr. Thomas. Good men, like Robert Jordan, sacrificed themselves for noble causes which had been betrayed, while opportunists, like Pablo, escaped to demonstrate the truth of the Spanish maxim that for success in war and politics "the first thing is to continue to exist." Mr. Thomas has, like Hemingway, portrayed the war as an education, an education in what happens to good, brave men and their ideas in time of war, an education filled with enough ironies, discoveries, reversals, and suffering to overburden a cycle of tragedies.

Poets and story-tellers like Spender, Day-Lewis, Auden and Hemingway taught Mr. Thomas the truth about the Spanish Civil War.

A partisan political artist like Orwell could not see the war as tragic. He could not detach himself sufficiently from his own causes and experiences to perceive the tragedy of noble men struggling in vain against an ignoble destiny. As a consequence, Orwell's *Homage to Catalonia* is, as Thomas points out (pp. 424-429), a marvelous autobiographical document, not history;³ similarly, his final masterpieces, *Animal Farm* and *1984* remain of a lower order of excellence, personal fantasy, not vision. Mr. Thomas's *Spanish Civil War*, on the other hand, portrays the war in its epic historic sweep and its final human measure.

Is it also the "true" war? Thomas himself is not as dogmatic in claiming finality for his history as Orwell is in claiming that the true history of the war could never be written. Mr. Thomas admits that "like all history" his picture of the war "is incomplete, shadowy, inadequate. New material will become available which may alter some of the judgments formed here." Yet, he asks, is history merely a matter of documents, a record and not a monument? "Even if every official paper bearing on the war in every country had been available to me, I do not know that I would gain a totally accurate impression of the subtle minds of, say, General Franco, and the Republican Prime Minister, Dr. Negrín. And would a ton of military and other papers enable one to form a complete picture of what the war meant to the Spaniards? (p. xix)" If history must, finally, explain "what the war meant," I think Mr. Thomas's history is as true a picture as men shall ever possess of the Spanish Civil War.

Whatever may be the final verdict of history on the truth of Mr. Thomas's *Spanish Civil War*, the burden of tragedy's obsessive

³ Orwell himself commented of his experiences, "If this was history it did not feel like it." *Homage to Catalonia* (London, 1938), p. 187.

theme about man is magnificently sustained throughout his book. And the theme itself is expressed with characteristic dramatic irony in the "Epilogue" in the words of Manuel Azaña, President of the Spanish Republic. Azaña earlier in the book had been characterized as "marvelously eloquent, master of every subject on which he spoke," and yet he had failed as a leader because "he cultivated a superhuman detachment and an intellectual purity which led him to overlook the existing facts of Spanish life" (pp. 24-25). This is the man chosen by Thomas to point out the only hope "that one day the Spanish people will attain the lasting happiness that they deserve" (p. 623), and these are his words:

When the torch passes to other hands, to other men, to other generations, let them remember, if they ever feel their blood boil and the Spanish temper is once more infuriated with intolerance, hatred and destruction, let them think of the dead, and listen to their lesson: the lesson of those who have bravely fallen in battle, generously fighting for a great ideal, and who now, protected by their maternal soil, feel no hate or rancour, and who send us, with the sparkling of their light, tranquil and remote as that of a star, the message of the eternal Fatherland which says to all its sons: Peace, Pity and Pardon.

A historian who believes that only a man who failed because he was blind to the facts before his eyes can perceive through all the "intolerance, hatred, and destruction" of the past its message of "Peace, Pity and Pardon" is a historian who writes in the spirit of the greatest masterpieces of tragic art. A history like *The Spanish Civil War* inspires "pity and fear" as profound as any tragedy, perhaps more so because as Thucydides, the greatest artist in history, said centuries ago in writing of another civil war: "The sufferings which revolution entailed upon the cities were many and terrible, such as have occurred and always will occur as long as the nature of mankind remains the same." Historians, no less than divines, poets, and storytellers, tell us for whom the bell has tolled.

OWEN JENKINS

A Russian Novel

THE TRIAL BEGINS

by ABRAM TERTZ

Translated by Max Hayward. Pantheon Books, 1960, \$2.95

If you have not heard of this novel, perhaps the first thing you'll want to know about it is that it was smuggled out of the Soviet Union in Russian manuscript by a person who signs himself "Abram Tertz." He is a Soviet citizen, presumably a man in his early forties, and it is quite possible that in his true identity he is not known in his own country as a professional writer. The English translator of *The Trial Begins*, Max Hayward, collaborated in the translation of the late Boris Pasternak's *Doctor Zhivago*. People who have read both the Russian (serialized here in a Russian-language newspaper) and the English of the Tertz novel find that Mr. Hayward has done an excellent job.

From the opening page of this short book—it runs only 128 pages—it becomes immediately clear why the writer made no attempt to have his story published in the USSR. It defies every tenet of Soviet publishing ethics and quietly jeers at the mystique of Socialist Realism which, in all the Iron Curtain countries, is supposed to govern creative endeavor in the arts. "Abram Tertz" had to write his book in secrecy and keep it hidden until he could get it out of the country for non-Soviet eyes to read and non-Soviet heads to ponder. And this, of all the ironies in the book, is perhaps the most ironic feature of *The Trial Begins*. For the author's sophisticated dissection of life in the upper circles of Soviet bureaucracy, his analysis of official virtue, his insistence on laughing at what in the Communist view it is most reprehensible to laugh at—these are qualities that would be most easily comprehended by an intelligent and basically irreverent Soviet citizen. How many millions of these there are who

would gleefully appreciate this book if they could get hold of a copy to read in private is anyone's guess.

There are fewer than a dozen identifiable characters in this bitter comedy—comic tragedy, if you prefer—and they may well be taken as symbols or types. One of these is an author, the man who gives himself no name but "Writer" or "Scribbler," and who tells us, in a Prologue, how he came to produce this work. It was in the last months of Stalin's rule, in the period when the aging dictator seemed indestructible. Two plainclothes men of the secret police entered the writer's room somewhere in Moscow in the small hours of the morning. They searched his quarters, and told him he was being trusted. Then a vision appeared to the writer—a huge hand, clenched into a fist. And a voice boomed in his ear, ordering him to write a story that would make a hero out of the City Public Prosecutor. The fist and the voice represented the Master. In these first few pages the reader is struck by the deft interweaving of the figurative and the real, the sardonic use of imagery in both color and tone. Take, for example, this brief account of the behavior of the two secret visitors:

"They had modest, thoughtful faces and they looked like twins. One of them went through my pockets. Then he made a small neat pile of the sheets of paper scattered on the table and, moistening his fingers, counted them; there were seven all together. He ran his hand over the first page and, presumably by way of censorship, scooped up all the characters and punctuation marks. One flick of the hand and there on the blank paper was a writhing heap of purple marks. The young man put them in his pocket. One letter—I think it was an s—flicked its tail and tried to wriggle out, but he caught it, tore off its legs, and squashed it with his fingernail."

You can tell at once that this writer will not succeed in carrying out the Master's orders satisfactorily. His hero—"positive hero" in the language of the Soviet literary theorists—embodies all the Communist virtues. He is ambitious for himself and his son, he adores his beautiful young wife. Above all, he is devoted to the Master and the Party, he is dedicated to the Glorious Aim. But, as the writer portrays him, Prosecutor Globov is an unlovable man. We meet him first as he is finishing up a night's work in his study at home. (The

Globovs are so well off that they have an apartment all to themselves.) He has been going over the case against a certain Doctor Rabinovich, suspected of having procured an abortion. Such an operation is illegal, but scarcely worth the trouble of a prosecution by so prominent a man as Globov. From his name, the suspect is clearly one of those "rootless cosmopolitans," and by no means the first Rabinovich our hero has had to deal with. Yet from this inauspicious beginning, there is soon to grow the whole fantastic structure of the "Jewish Doctors' Plot" of 1953. This, in the author's fancy, is how the trial begins. For Globov has been hoping for a child by his present wife, and when she tells him she has had an abortion, he is determined to punish all the Rabinoviches as enemies of the state.

Globov has to sustain the loss not only of his unborn child, but the more embarrassing loss of his son by an earlier marriage—a high-school boy named Seryozha who gets into the worst kind of trouble, political trouble. Seryozha has been asking awkward questions of his history teacher, who reports to Globov that the boy shows signs of "a morbid curiosity." The father at first argues with his son and tries to set him straight; it is only later that he realizes he must disown his heir. Seryozha has been studying the writings of the founding fathers, and he finds discrepancies between Communist theory and Communist practice. And so we have the following scene between the Prosecutor, who from the given description seems to look very much like Khrushchev, and his slender, serious-minded son, who wants to understand the difference between just and unjust wars. He tells his father of his questions to the history teacher:

"So what I couldn't understand was Valeryan Valeryanovich's saying that Yermak's conquest of Siberia was just, and so was the crushing of Shamil's rebellion . . ."

"Yes," said Globov thoughtfully, "we can't do without Siberia. Nor without the Caucasus. Oil. Manganese . . ."

"And when the English conquered India, they also . . ."

"You stop making such comparisons," cried Globov in alarm. "What have the English got to do with it? Where do you think we're living? In England?"

"He thought for a moment. Really England was quite irrelevant. Why England?"

"But historically speaking . . ."

"Historically speaking my foot! Study your history but don't forget the present day. Think of what we're building!"

Think of what we have achieved already! Well, there you are—In the final reckoning, if you see what I mean—ultimately—our ancestors were right. What they did was just.’

“Seryozha’s father was right but Seryozha felt sorry for Shamyĭ. After all, how could Shamyĭ know the Revolution would take place in Russia? All he wanted was to free his own people, it was only afterward that it turned out to be wrong, and even antisocialist as well . . .”

The story of *The Trial Begins*—the narrative itself—comes to a conclusion with the death of the Master, as Stalin is invariably called here. But before this point is reached, we meet a number of privileged Soviet citizens in various attitudes, sketched in brief vignettes that are like flashes on a colored screen. We attend a concert with Prosecutor Globov and his son; visit the Planetarium with Globov’s wife and her would-be lover, who happens to be the Defense Counsel; listen to the thunder of the Prosecutor’s voice as he rehearses, in an empty courtroom, his part in the coming trial of Rabinovich; observe the ingenuity of the secret police; watch the last minutes of a football game; dine in an expensive restaurant; witness a couple of private parties for the select. In composite, the vignettes form a picture of The New Class. It is not a static picture: the characters interact upon one another in ways that are altogether plausible, given the system in which they move and have their being.

After the story proper, the author brings us up to date in an Epilogue, whose setting is a concentration camp in far-off Siberia. It is years after Stalin’s death when we now meet again a few of the people involved in the story, and learn what has happened to some of the others, who managed to remain in Moscow. The “Scribbler” is of course here to tell us. Implicitly he tells us also that though the nature of the police state has not changed, there are still some Soviet artists like himself who see with an undimmed eye, whose imaginations keep on racing within their minds, whose humor and comprehension find expression in secret, and perhaps are secretly shared.

BETTINA HARTENBACH

O WOE! ETC.

TIMES THREE by Phyllis McGinley. Viking, 1960, \$5.00

THE TREE WITCH by Peter Viereck. Scribners, 1961, \$3.50

For anyone who wants to be depressed about the state of verse in our time I can recommend, particularly, two books: Phyllis McGinley's collected poems and Peter Viereck's new verse play. The two have little in common, and one of them, the McGinley book, is perhaps even a good book; but together they make a fine occasion for lament. The trouble is that since one of them won the Pulitzer prize for verse in 1961, and since the other is by a man who won the Pulitzer prize for verse a few years back, the lament should probably be broadcast on a national hook-up rather than hidden away in these private pages. Pulitzers deserve a lot of volume.

Miss McGinley is an accomplished poet in ways that few Americans are, being unusually well versed in the properties of verse, and being both proponent and practitioner of what is called, ambiguously, occasional poetry. She is also a very funny poet, and this too is rare. Less rare but equally commendable is her capacity, which she displays too infrequently, for controlled fervor about the usual personal matters—growing old, needing love, discovering fear, and so on. What, then, is there to lament? Not Miss McGinley but her connections. Her name and *The New Yorker's* go firmly together. Miss McGinley and Ogden Nash are the two poets of consequence who have been launched and sent to sea by *The New Yorker*, even though that magazine has printed most of our prominent poets and even though, as our country's most affluent literary sheet, it has the power to get any kind of poetry it wishes. I lament, therefore, not Miss McGinley but the image of the nature of poetry itself one derives from discovering her kind of verse thus enthroned. This subject is a complicated one, and I'd like to go into it at length elsewhere

sometime, but my main point is easy: despite the variety of poetry which *The New Yorker* has published the magazine is known, and I think properly known, primarily for printing verse like Miss McGinley's, poetry in which the poet has not extended himself, poetry of the lesser feelings, poetry of the aside, poetry of the parlor rather than the rack or the temple or the deathbed—gentle poetry, subdued poetry, clean minor verse. *The New Yorker* has majored in the minors, and in the process has perhaps contributed something to making poetry what it is now, a minor-league affair. Thus my respect for Miss McGinley's verse is tempered, though admittedly unfairly, by my dissatisfaction with the state of the art when represented by her.

The Viereck case is, as I have said, quite different, for Mr. Viereck, despite a yearning to be thought of as a wit (both the funny kind and the metaphysical kind), also yearns to be thought of as great seer, thus managing to produce heavy nonsense wholly alien to the spirit of wit in Miss McGinley's work. *The Tree Witch* is a marvelous demonstration, for my money, of how it is possible to take a few simple verse ingredients (lumpy iambs, unsalted symbols, shredded generalizations, fried intensifiers) and produce a dish so alien to the conventional rhetorical food of our time that it will pass for (modern) poetry:

The outcast calls our miracles mirages.
We call her skirts and petals camouflages.
The roots of flowers smuggle earthquakes up.
All beauty is a whiff of the abyss.

Frankly I would have thought those lines a joke if I had found them alone on my doorstep, but they are pretty representative of *The Tree Witch* as a whole, which—though I find this hard to believe—poses as a serious verse drama and has been actually staged. Now the fact that the lines are completely unsuited to the stage—on the one hand containing mere fuzzy, disconnected platitudes about life dressed up with a few jazzy words like "whiff" and "smuggle," and on the other asserting that verse is a wholly different language from any that anybody under any possible real or stage circumstances would ever possibly speak—the fact that the lines are not for any stage is presumably of no consequence to Mr. Viereck; he is not interested in producing a drama but a sort of fireworks display in words; he does not want his audience to react with pity, terror, joy, sorrow or

LAMENT

anything else of that drab nature, but wants them to express awe and wonder at a bunch of characters talking so funny. His work is one of those that may be described—and indeed is so described on the dustjacket—as experimental and extraordinary, just as Rube Goldberg's devices were experimental and extraordinary. It is a kind of work that I lament a good deal more than Miss McGinley's—for it aspires to be so much more—but for something like the same reason: in its way-outness, like Miss McGinley's volume in its concentration upon incidentals, it is just another bit of prominent publishers' testimony that poetry is now an art like flower-arranging or easter-egg painting.

Oh woe! But who am I, those I offend may ask, to be lamenting those faults in others that are to be found in my own work, and in the magazine I edit? I? Oh, I grant readily my involvement ("Marguerite, are you grieving / Over goldengrove unleaving?"—a literary reference), and I suspect my involvement to be the chief source of my present sadness. Certainly it is a good reason for now extending my choral commentary, thus: Oh woe! Oh woe!

RW

The Breaking of the Self

SELECTED POEMS

by CONRAD AIKEN

Oxford University Press. 1961. \$4.75

To the name and long career in letters of Conrad Aiken, the epithet "distinguished" indissolubly adheres. This means that although he has won his meed of praise and prizes, his work is little known and seldom discussed. A writer of novels, autobiography, criticism, and short stories (one or two of these repeatedly reprinted in collections), he is principally a poet. His characteristic mode is the long meditative and evocative poem, and thus he has not been taken up by makers of anthologies. His characteristic voice is an introspective murmur. The appearance now of Mr. Aiken's *Selected Poems* will probably not at once provide him with a larger or more passionately attentive public. But perhaps it will encourage a somewhat more persistent effort by critics to describe and assess his achievement. Difficult but not inaccessible, his poems deserve to be taken seriously and in the peace and quiet his rather remote reputation makes possible.

In a review of a volume of his own verse which in 1919 Mr. Aiken was invited to write for *Poetry* (reprinted in the *Collected Poems* of 1953), he offered a description of his poetic method which seems to me to apply also to much of his later work and to account in part for its difficulty:

I flatly give myself away as being in quest of a sort of absolute poetry, a poetry in which the intention is not so much to arouse an emotion merely, or to persuade of a reality, as to employ such emotion or sense of reality (tangentially

struck) with the same cool detachment with which a composer employs notes or chords. . . . Such a poetry . . . will not so much present an idea as use its resonance.

I find little "cool detachment" in these poems, and I am not persuaded that the compositional use of the "resonance" of ideas is for Mr. Aiken an end in itself. Rather, it is a rhetorical means, through which a reader is induced to share with remarkable intimacy Aiken's voyages through the country of the mind.

This is his chosen province and a persistent metaphor. The qualities and motives of the inward exploration are rarely stated but assumed to be the common experience of poet and reader, to be suffered anew and together. Although we have had other reports from chaos and are familiar with disintegrations of the ego, Aiken's special notions about these experiences need to be separated from their "resonances" before we can hear them clearly.

Three long poems, *Preludes for Memnon*, or *Preludes to Attitude*, *Time in the Rock*, or *Preludes to Definition*, and the last poem of the collection, *The Crystal*, a kind of valedictory summing up of earlier themes, provide us with an abundance of texts. In consequence of his perhaps fortunate fall from an Eden of intellectual order and emotional singleness (*this* metaphor is taken up directly in the less successful *Landscape West of Eden*), modern man has become alienated from his world and has become a wanderer in a chaos of mind, in a sort of endless regression inward. From *Time in the Rock*, a passage of unusual explicitness:

We need a theme? then let that be our theme:
that we, poor grovellers between faith and doubt,
the sun and north star lost, and compass out,
the heart's weak engine all but stopped,
the time timeless in this chaos of our wills — that
we must ask a theme, something to think,
something to say. . . .

From this arises the need for explorations, in darkness, of the inner self and the unconscious, our only sources of knowledge. The mind has lost touch with the body. The imagination can no longer through its images possess reality. In both sequences of *Preludes* Aiken is absorbed with the breaking of the self into mind and body. Man is either an angel in the abyss of inwardness or a mere "digester of food": "Move outward, and you only move, poor biped,/ an atom's

atom from here to here, never/ from here to there. . . ." The Book of Nature (companion volume to seventeenth-century or "meta-physical" geographies of the inner life, of which we often think as we read) has become "the picture world,/ the lost and broken child's book," and no longer may we "in one picture find unaltered heaven." Instead we must "be angelic, close brave wings,/ fall through the fathomless, feel the cold void."

Our alienated selves may find a little solace together: "Your chaos is my world; perhaps my chaos/ Is world enough for you" (the romantic assumption about rhetoric: thus a twentieth-century Wordsworth might turn to his sister after gazing in at some Tintern Abbey of the mind). What we wait for is the miracle of simplicity, the reunion of self with nature, some evening in a garden when "the lizard waits/ for the slow snake to slide among cold leaves/ . . . and time becomes/ a timeless crystal, an eternity." Or (from *The Crystal*) the mind's full possession, perhaps in death, of its perceptions, the moment when "you . . . stand there . . . at the center of your thought, which is timeless,/ yourself become crystal."

In an essay on "Freud—and the Analysis of Poetry," pertinent here because Aiken himself has been so much concerned with Freud and the composition of poetry, Kenneth Burke notes that "transitional disembodiment [is] an intermediate step between old self and new self." Perhaps this is the main point of connection between Aiken's themes and the way he usually plays them, his preoccupation with music and musical form, and with "resonances." Music, or rather its approximation in poetry, can provide a bodiless ordering of experience, and can be made to correspond most nearly to the abstraction and fluidity of introspection, Aiken's "abyss." In the first of the *Preludes for Memnon*, for example, we make the transition from a room with a person in it to the depths of reverie, thus:

Here is the in-drawn room, to which you return
When the wind blows from Arcturus: here is the fire
At which you warm your hands and glaze your eyes;
The piano, on which you touch the cold treble;
Five notes like breaking icicles, and then silence.

The alarm-clock ticks, the pulse keeps time with it,
Night and the mind are full of sounds. . . .
Darkness and snow ticking the window: silence,
And the knocking of chains on a motor-car, the tolling

Of a bronze bell, dedicated to Christ.
And then the uprush of angelic wings, the beating
Of wings demonic, from the abyss of the mind:
The darkness filled with a feathery whistling, wings
Numberless as the flakes of angelic snow,
The deep void swarming with wings and sound of wings,
The winnowing of chaos. . . .

We notice, of course, the quite familiar ways in which immediacy and inwardness are achieved — the use of present participles and the second person, parallel phrases, the linking of bodily sensations (darkness, cold, clock ticking, snow ticking, flakes of angelic snow) with the "abyss of the mind." But as the *Preludes* go on something else happens. The items (we cannot quite call them images) in the passage are picked up, developed, set in strange contexts, until they are transmuted into elements of thought, and somehow lose what solidity they at first seemed to possess. They do *not*, in other words, become symbols. Disembodiment is a condition in which outward things are cut off from inward light and we have the light only. It is a state complementary to the one which Hamlet knew, when books are "words, words, words."

This technique serves to represent with full immediacy the dis-integrations of the modern psyche, and Aiken is not usually driven to seek correspondences in disintegrated syntax, tricky allusions, and all that. An exception is *The Coming Forth By Day of Osiris Jones*, which Aiken tells us is "one poem" with the two sequences of preludes, and which derives its conception and some of its lines from a pamphlet published by the British Museum! It also owes a great deal to *Ulysses* and features, for example, a cricket who goes "seek . . . see . . . seek . . . see," and a dialogue between Mr. Jones and his mirror to point up the problem of disembodiment and allow the hero to defend introspection and the dredging up of the unconscious. The mirror gets the best lines, (or seems to, if you read the poem along with too much other Aiken):

well, keep the change, then, Mr. Jones,
and if you can, keep brains and bones,
but as for me I'd rather be
unconscious, except when I see.

Osiris Jones apart, Mr. Aiken allows himself, and can afford to, all the old resources of English: sentences that come out, rhetorical

AIKEN'S POEMS

Now I am waking: now I begin:
Writhe like a snake from the outworn skin:
And I open my eyes: and the world looks in!

Unless we all disintegrate in that other way we have in mind these days, much of Aiken's poetry will for a long time remain alive and interesting to readers who will take a little trouble over it. I don't know how he will be ranked among his contemporaries. For the time being, of course, we are weary of inwardness and outwardness, death and rebirth, the unconscious, and most generalizations about US. Thus Aiken now may easily irritate. Nevertheless he has absorbed into poetry in a masterful way attitudes, ideas, and states of mind at once specific to our time and to our human nature, and his best work will survive to do him honor.

LUCILLE HERBERT



(Continued from Page 9)

2. Sight (visual), sound (aural), and motion (kinaesthetic)

"Thee for my recitative,
Thee in the driving storm
even as now, the snow
[what about thermal here?],
the winter-day declining."

3. Taste (gustatory)

See the stanza, quoted
above . . . , from "The Eve
of St. Agnes."

—from *A Guide to Literary
Study*, Leon T. Dickinson,
pp. 50-51.^a

If textbooks like these do not produce more of a revolution in one year than this column will do in twenty (within, that is, the segment of the environment which we are oriented to, which we see, hear, smell, taste, touch and feel the heat and motion of, and which we presumably "understand" though we may not "comprehend"), I'm a shotten herring.

Well, now, where does this leave us? One gets to feel after a time—doesn't one?—that one no longer knows who are the sots and who are the besotted. Things fall apart, the center cannot hold, and it is no wonder that we end up talking to each other like this:

These notes have definitely an ulterior purpose which it is to be hoped will become clear, and

not only clear but measurably acceptable to a few readers. What that purpose is cannot now be said, and cannot in all probability ever be said, by this writer, in a short form of words: it will show, if at all, as the result—call it meaning—call it frame of mind—of the elements here put together. It may be said briefly enough, though, with what this purpose has to do: With the profession of writing, only implicitly with criticism as a separate form of writing, more especially with the obligation of the critic to use what little power he can borrow to establish the idea of the writer as a man with a profession. It is a labor then, frankly hortatory, tactlessly moral; and it is undertaken because of those feelings, in a rising gorge, of stress, unease, and perfidious futility which form the basis of immediate reaction to the general impact of writing in America.

—R. P. Blackmur, in *Language
as Gesture*

Yes, yes, Blackmur should have thrown away this typewriter-circling bit and started over. But let him who is not without syntax cast the first stone.

Notes:

¹ 98¢ to E. H. Brenner.

² RW's note: I confess that although our staff is a large one I have always written important notices like this one.

DEPT. OF AMERICAN

If you think I am incompetent to turn out a subscription reminder, you should see me at work on the instructions for a multiple-guess question on an English exam ("choose four of the five following quotations and compare each with each, devoting a paragraph of not more than 9000 words to each, being sure first to identify the author of each or, if not that, the period in which each was written, and, second," etc.). As for your suggestion that we (I) write simply, "If necessary correct your address," this is of course also redundant (but much less precisely so than mine), for who would correct their address if it were not necessary? Furthermore, why is it necessary? is the subscriber perhaps obliged to *pretend* that he has moved—and for what dark reason?—when in fact he has not?—No, I can't accept your suggestion, nor the suggestion by a colleague, "Please

note any change of address." *Any* change of address? *Your* address? *My* address? President Kennedy's address?—Obviously our simple subscription machinery could not keep up with *any* change of address. \$5.00 to anybody who sends in the phrase that satisfies *me*.

³ RW's note: I'll clean up my office if you'll clean up your transitions.

⁴ See three.

⁵ \$2.50 to David Ray.

⁶ \$2.50 to Robert Richheimer.

⁷ See three.

⁸ \$5.00 to the first reader who can find anything gustatory in the first stanza of "The Eve of St. Agnes."

Additional footnote, to footnote 2. Editor EL puts in his claim for the \$5 with, "If you think it will help you, or us, in any way, please change your address." This is very good, but still not good enough.

INDEX

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1961

Volume II, Numbers 1-4



INDEX TO VOLUME II, 1961

(note: first number is issue; second number is page number)

STORIES & ESSAYS

Wayne Booth, <i>Department of American</i>	I, 121; II, 60; IV, 6
"The First Full Professor of Ironology".....	II, 60
"Another True Moment In American History".....	II, 68
Douglas Davis, "Questions and Answers".....	III, 122
H. E. F. Donohue, "The Man Who Knew What Ethiopia Should Do About Her Water Table".....	IV, 65
John Dos Passos, "Contemporary Chronicles".....	II, 25
George P. Elliot, "On Pound — Poet of Many Voices".....	III, 79
Irvin Faust, "Into the Green Night".....	I, 31
Peter Fingesten, "Flight into Zen".....	I, 42
Charles C. Gillispie, "Solomon's House".....	II, 3
Luis Harss, "Hunger".....	II, 35
Stanley Edgar Hyman, "Descent, Fall & Sex — Darwin's Victorianism".	IV, 11
Erling Larsen, "Hi, Ho, Fidelity".....	III, 35
"Babes In Mooseland".....	IV, 80
Robert Lowry, "Ten Questions".....	I, 72
"The Girl with the Big Pocketbook".....	I, 77
"The Keepsake".....	III, 26
Jack Ludwig, "This Burden, Identity".....	III, 17
Jean Malaquais, "The Hitch-Hiker".....	III, 3
Arthur Mizener, "Larsen's Second Law: Some New Evidence on the Editorial Policies of the Luce Enterprises".....	II, 94
Howard Nemerov, "Themes & Methods: The Early Stories of Thomas Mann".....	I, 3
Donald Schier, "A Playgoer in Paris".....	IV, 95
Edward M. White, "The Presence of Pain".....	IV, 26
Reed Whittmore, "Kenneth Rexroth's Murdered Heroes".....	II, 99
"A Quarter's Worth".....	IV, 5

REVIEWS

James Agee & Walker Evans, <i>Let Us Now Praise Famous Men</i> (Erling Larsen).....	I, 86
Conrad Aiken, <i>Selected Poems</i> (Lucille Herbert).....	IV, 117

Elizabeth Bowen, <i>A Time in Rome</i> (John Lucas).....	II, 85
Albert Camus, <i>The Possessed</i> , translated by Justin O'Brien (Robert Tracy)	II, 70
Scott Elledge and Donald Schier, editors, <i>The Continental Model</i> (Owen Jenkins)	I, 109
George P. Elliott, <i>Among the Dangs</i> (R. V. Cassill).....	II, 82
Richard Ellmann, <i>James Joyce</i> (Jack Ludwig).....	I, 112
<i>The Esquire Reader</i> (Hucklebury Squib).....	III, 109
Walker Evans and James Agee, <i>Let Us Now Praise Famous Men</i> (Erling Larsen).....	I, 86
E. M. Forster, <i>Alexandria: A History and a Guide</i> (Robert Tracy)....	III, 113
James B. Hall, <i>Racers to the Sun</i> (R. V. Cassill).....	I, 102
Weldon Kees, <i>Collected Poems</i> , edited by Donald Justice (Howard Nemerov).....	II, 89
Bruce Ingham Granger, <i>Political Satire in the American Revolution</i> (Brom Weber).....	II, 77
John F. Lynen, <i>The Pastoral Art of Robert Frost</i> (Walker Gibson)....	I, 105
Phyllis McGinley, <i>Three Times Three</i> (Reed Whittemore).....	IV, 114
Aubrey Menen, <i>Rome for Ourselves</i> (John Lucas).....	II, 85
A. A. Milne, <i>Winnie-ille-Pu</i> (Robert Tracy and Dudley Fitts).....	III, 118
Howard Nemerov, <i>New and Selected Poems</i> (Ambrose Gordon, Jr.)....	I, 116
George W. Nitchie, <i>Human Values in the Poetry of Robert Frost</i> (Walker Gibson).....	I, 105
Beverly Pepper, <i>See Rome and Eat</i> (John Lucas).....	II, 85
Donald Schier & Scott Elledge, Editors, <i>The Continental Model</i> (Owen Jenkins).....	I, 109
Elizabeth Shepley Sergeant, <i>Robert Frost: The Trial by Existence</i> (Walker Gibson).....	I, 105
C. P. Snow, <i>Science and Government</i> (Owen Jenkins).....	III, 104
Eric Solomon, <i>The Faded Banners: A Treasury of Nineteenth Century Civil War Fiction</i> (Robert Tracy).....	I, 97
Abram Tertz, <i>The Trial Begins</i> (Bettina Hartenbach).....	IV, 110
Hugh Thomas, <i>The Spanish Civil War</i> (Owen Jenkins).....	IV, 102
Peter Viereck, <i>The Tree Witch</i> (Reed Whittemore).....	IV, 114

VERSE

Scott Bates.....	I, 26; III, 14	Philip Booth.....	II, 20
Francis Berry.....	II, 30	Richard Emil Braun.....	IV, 62

Robert Grant Burns.....	II, 57	Paul B. Newman.....	IV, 41
David Cornel DeJong.....	III, 72	Andrew Oerke.....	I, 30
Pierre Henri Delattre.....	I, 63	Ronald Offen.....	III, 22
Irving Feldman.....	IV, 58	Marian Parry.....	I, 20
Thom Gunn.....	II, 19	John Pauker.....	II, 29
Ramon Guthrie.....	I, 58	Donald Petersen.....	I, 62
Donald Hall.....	I,61; IV, 55	Paul Petrie.....	III, 12
Martin Halpern.....	III, 76	Charles Philbrick.....	IV, 42
Leslie Woolf Hedley.....	IV, 53	Kenneth Pitchford.....	II, 21
William S. Hillman.....	III, 70	Richard C. Raymond....	II,59; IV, 51
Patricia Hooper.....	IV, 64	Barry Spacks.....	II,32; III, 32
Richard F. Hugo.....	IV, 48	Nancy Sullivan.....	III, 30
Donald Justice.....	IV, 57	Robert Sward.....	I, 67
Carolyn Kizer.....	III, 10	John Taylor.....	II,56; IV, 54
Ernest Kroll.....	IV, 46	Tracy Thompson.....	III,68; II, 54
Sigrid Larsen.....	I, 70	Saul Touster.....	I, 68
Robert Lax.....	I, 21	Christopher Waters.....	II, 53
Malcolm Lowry.....	IV, 34	Reed Whittemore.....	I,80; IV, 60
John Lucas.....	III, 78	Thomas Williams.....	III, 74
Thomas McAfee.....	IV, 45	Robley C. Wilson.....	IV, 49
Barriss Mills.....	I, 64	Harold Witt.....	I, 60
John Montague.....	III,24; IV, 43	David Young.....	II,58; I, 66
Howard Nemerov.....	II,22; IV, 36		



miscellany. Pronounce *míselani* or *misélani*; the OED put the former first, and RECESSIVE ACCENT is in its favour.

RECESSIVE ACCENT. The accentuation of English words is finally settled by the action of three forces on the material presented to them in each word. First, the habit of concentrating on one syllable, or in long words sometimes on two, and letting the others take care of themselves. . . .

Secondly, recessive accent, or the drift of this usually single stress towards the beginning of the word. The most obvious illustration is what happens to the French words we borrow; *chateau*, *plateau*, *tableau*, *garage* [editor's note: *gárage*? indeed!]. . . .

But, thirdly, there comes into conflict with both these tendencies a repugnance to strings of obscure syllables. . . . The word **CONTUMELY**, with its five pronunciations, is an interesting case, discussed separately.

contumely. The possible pronunciations, given here in order of merit, are . . .

— from Fowler's *Dictionary of Modern English Usage*

